
Interviews from 1980

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Typographical conventions

The editor's spoken words, mostly questions, are in this typeface. The interviewee's words are in this type face. Narrative outside the actual conversations is in this typeface.

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Library music interviews

1. KPM (London)

This conversation with Ron Singer of KPM Recorded Music Library took place on Monday 10 March 1980 on the first floor of KPM's Denmark Street headquarters.

How, when and why did mood music libraries actually start?

I think it was in the earlier part of the Hollywood era. I remember handling a tape from the States which was full of hat awful stuff from Hollywood. They were actual backing tracks from feature films which they then formed into libraries. After the films had died out they tried to interest people in using the background music, first in radio and later on, of course, in television.

What about the origins of this particular company? They're 75 years old as a music publishing company.

Well, Keith Prowse, the KP in KPM, was an enterprising person who started the music publishing company and Peter Maurice (the PM in KPM) had his company here in Denmark Street too. The street was full of publishers and it was London's Tin Pan Alley. Both Prowse and Maurice were bought out by EMI, so the KPM part of it is Keith Prowse plus Peter Maurice, both of whom started as ordinary music publishers. The recorded music library came into being because people would come into us wanting to use a piece of standard music in a film. They might want to use *Pennies from Heaven* in a commercial and then they would be given the rights to use it for a price. From this sort of demand they developed the idea of recording specially for music in films.

You know what the old kind of background music was like - a bit corny and too 'typical': for example the sort of mentality that says when you see a train the music must go 'chug, chug, chug' and so on. In America they still use this sort of thing. They must have a terrible imagination! They even have music of that type behind commentaries on television. I think we are past that stage here although we still have to produce a few corny Muzak type of things every now and again just to satisfy this market ...

Is that any particular market asking for this corny stuff?

No, not really. Perhaps I should first say that nobody ever accused a film producer or director of having a good sense of music. Most of them just don't have a clue.

What about Eisenstein and Prokofiev?

Of course there are exceptions. I'm mostly thinking of those making documentaries, newsreels and so on. Even the advertising people can be totally clueless. What they seem to operate on is their own particular musical favourites. You perhaps have someone making a film on hot air balloons. He sends his editor out to select the music. The editor in his turn says that the director wants *D'Ye Ken John Peel?* played by the Coldstream Guards as music for this hot air balloon film. Firstly we have to inform this music editor that we don't have anything by the Coldstream Guards and secondly we advise him that even if we did, it just wouldn't fit the situation. Then perhaps he'll say: 'how about *Raindrops keep Falling On Your Head?*'. You see, it's difficult to educate some of our clients out of plumping for personal favourites. Some of the music we produce now is frankly quite good enough to go out on commercial discs. Some of it is, I think, very way out, very exciting and some of it is very big. I mean, we use the London Philharmonic Orchestra for recordings sometimes...

About 100 musicians?

No, about 64 of them at a time, mainly the string section. A session like that would cost us over £16,000 to record which is on a par with commercial productions, although I'm not talking about the sort of production where they spend months in the studio recording and mixing. We do it in two or three days flat [record an LP]. Sorry, what was your question again?

Who started this library when and why?

Who started it? We've already dealt with that. When? I'm not sure of dates, but the reason was to satisfy film people without them having to pay large amounts in order to use music owned by standard composers.

So it wasn't started as a direct consequence of the talkies in the thirties but a later phenomenon?

Yes. Still, another important thing is the question of money, of company budgets. You see, up to a few years ago most advertising agents

and even those just producing documentaries would be able to afford to get an orchestra into the studio and record the backing track. It wasn't very expensive at all. But with the advent of strict union rules and rates, the rise of studio costs and costs in general, the film or advertising budgets can afford to record less and less of their own backing tracks. This is why background libraries have become more and more useful – because of costs. Using library music costs very little compared to having music scored, played and recorded for a film or commercial. It can often even work better as well.

How large is your collection at present?

There are 300 or so LPs in the main library.

Do you sell the records in the collection or does your income come from royalties.

From royalties.

Who are your main customers?

Previously it was mainly people doing educational films, low-budget commercials and so on, That changed and it became more and more a television thing. At this stage it's changing again. Although we still supply people with music for their educational films, their documentaries, trade films and for television. The big thing now is audiovisual presentations.

You mean slide shows, not videocassettes?

That's right. Videocassettes are the newest problem. When the copyright laws were brought in they didn't conceive of video-tape and certainly not home video; this meant that apart from existing copyright law there are no laws to putting music on video-tape. No, what I mean by 'audiovisual' is mainly presentations at exhibitions, for training staff, for demonstrating new products: in other words the sort of presentation that travels round to various places. There's an enormous market for this because it doesn't take as much to set up as an audiovisual producer as it does to go into film. All you need are a couple of recorders and slide projector and you're in business.

As far as our income here is concerned in connection with audiovisual, what happens here in Britain is as follows. A production company might want our library. We would then write a contract with that company for a period of five years. We'd supply him with an initial 100 records for £30 a year over a period of five years. As we bring out new

records — about 20 every year — he will receive those and of course he has the catalogue. We leave it up to the company to choose the first 100 records he wants. If their representative prefers, we can suggest the most suitable records for his particular business. If, however, he sees in our catalogue other records outside the 100 he's already chosen, he gets those too. It's just that the library is so vast that it would be too complicated to have 300 records to find your way around in rather than having the initial 100 on which you can build a collection to suit your needs. Another reason for this procedure is to avoid wasting his (and probably our) time: he won't have to come in here and listen through all our collection trying to find something. Instead he can listen and choose in the comfort of his own studio or office. If he has any problems he can still phone up and say, for example, 'I'm doing a film on horse racing; can you suggest anything?' Then we'll say 'have a listen to KPM 1004, 1165 and 1021; you might find something there'. He might then come back to us and ask for one track on tape or on magnetic film.² He might even dub off his own disc if he's not too fussy. The discs all have high quality pressing à la Deutsche Grammophon-Gesellschaft; and we pay 10p extra to have them classically pressed. This means that if he's careful with his records he can dub straight off them on to his tape or film.

So, the majority of your sale of records is to audiovisual producers?

Yes, or to universities with TV or radio courses, to advertising agencies and to anyone producing something that needs music. This means also to people who produce background music for hospitals, hotels etc. A lot of hospital radios have our collection.

Would a corporation like Muzak or 3M, or anyone producing 'functional' background music buy material from you?

Yes, definitely.

I had no idea of that. Do they look for any particular mood?

Very recently they've changed their policy so that now they're looking for known tunes. That limits considerably what they can get from us and leaves non-copyright music by composers who've been dead for a long time. This means light classics, folk tunes, etc. What we have in our library sets a particular mood too much for them they want easy lis-

2. The magnetic film track is put alongside the picture in the film cutting room and then goes on to the final optic soundtrack on the 16mm or 35 mm film.

tening material, that's all. Mind you, the noise of their tape and the quality of their loudspeakers sets enough of a mood as it is, I think!

Is this a large part of the action?

It is in the USA, but not over here.

Do you sell your library in the USA?

Yes, we have twenty agents throughout the world. We have agents in places like America, Australia, Scandinavia, South Africa, Switzerland, Germany and so on, in fact in all the main places where we might be needed. These agents set their own rates. In America, for example, they will sell you the disc for about \$8, which doesn't mean you can use the music indiscriminately because it won't be public domain just through buying the disc. I think it's a question of quality: you see, there are libraries which supply this really junky old movie music for which all you have to pay is a flat £500, let's say, and this gives you the right to do whatever you want with the music. However, the quality of this stuff is so bad.

I suppose you're referring to things like Background Music for Home Movies?

That's right.

Most libraries do seem to get the majority of their income from a sort of needle time rather than from the sale of discs.

Well, in America it's called 'needle time' while over here it's known as the 'mechanical rate'. The mechanical rate operates on thirty-second units. If someone wants to know how much a piece of music is going to cost them, we must first know ourselves what it's going to be used for: will it be a commercial film, an educational film, or what? Then we would need to know where it will be distributed since the rate increases accordingly. Will it be on Thames TV or on the whole ITV network? They might have to pay £75 per 30 seconds for a commercial.³

When the studio in question uses a piece of music they must fill out a cue sheet and send it to the MCPS.⁴ In this way the MCPS will be able to see that piece *a* by composer *b* lasting for *c* minutes and *d* seconds and belonging to library *e* has been used for production *f*. So they send the producer the license and the bill at the same time. The MCPS take

3. 1980: around £75 per 30 seconds for 1 station, £200 per 30 seconds for full network.

4. MCPS: Mechanical Copyright Protection Society.

off their administration fee and split the rest between the publisher and the composer who each get 50% each. Then there's another fee: every cinema, pub, theatre, radio and television station pays a blanket fee to the PRS⁵ according to the size of the place, the area they broadcast over, etc. If a piece of music has been used, the television company involved, for example, logs that piece and at the end of a month this log is sent to the PRS. They don't have to pay anything to the PRS for the use of that specific piece, but out of the blanket money the PRS receive the composer and publisher of the piece will each get 50% of an amount calculated on how many pieces have been broadcast by the composer in question. So two payments are made: one via the MCPS, the other via the PRS.

I don't know what it's like in England, but the Swedish PRS (STIM)⁶ can send us our money for broadcast music up to three years in arrears

It's not unusual here either. They have the most up-to-date computers and are still always three years behind.

Has most of the stuff in your catalogue been specially commissioned or has it been put together from previous productions? I mean, do you have music from old films in the library at all?

All our music is specially commissioned. Occasionally we might buy an ethnic tape from Australia, for example, simply because it's impossible to record the aborigines here.

So the didgeridoo is in your catalogue?

Not yet, but this is something we're actually working on at the moment. We'd probably pay the production costs and we would share royalty benefits with our Australian producer in this case. Another example is our American agent who produced an album of American college and football marches. This is something that has to be done in America — we can't do it here. Yes, generally speaking the music is all commissioned. Let me give you an example: one of the people about the office this afternoon is a very good synthesiser player. We might ask him to compose enough tracks for an album of synthesised music for industrial use. It could be the laboratory mood, communications or something like that. Actually he's downstairs at the moment.

Do you think he'd give me two or three minutes of his time? I'd like to ask him

5. PRS: Performing Rights Society.

6. STIM: Svenska tonsättarens internationella musikbyrå.

why he's using those notes or that registration and not others on that particular track, questions like that.....

...he probably wouldn't be able to tell you. It all comes naturally. You see, you find out that certain composers are very good in certain directions. This means that if we wanted, for example, to do a nature study album, we would know that there are certain people who have written specially well for animals, insects, etc. We'd describe the pictures we'd like them to create in music. Perhaps we'd say 'do something with flowers opening', perhaps 'do something with insects'. We know he has the feel for that sort of thing. Other people are good at industrial things or perhaps crime and detective moods, perhaps aeroplanes and so on. So each composer has his own field, really, his particular sound and feeling.

Do you delete anything from your catalogue?

I don't think we actually delete anything. It's quite amazing, but there are twenty-year-old pieces of music still in the catalogue. Incidentally, this is the best pension scheme for any composer because it goes on for ever and over. No matter how old the piece is, it's not like a hit that goes up and down, it just ticks over bringing in money for years and years.

How do you decide what needs to be added to the catalogue?

A lot of it is a question of anticipation and instinct. Take the [1980] Olympic Games for example. We know there'll be a lot of sport type music needed, possibly with a Russian feel to it, so we'd commission someone to do that.

Just to take a case in point, how would you go about producing a record in connection with the Moscow Olympics?

Well, we have in mind a particular composer who wrote the signature for BBC's 'Grandstand'.

That's Keith Mansfield, isn't it?

Yes. You see, we know that Keith is very good at writing sporty and fanfarish things. So we'd probably ask him to do the album and we have in fact done this. There's a lot of discussion, and talk in it at the planning stage. It would be in terms of the pictures you imagine will be shown, perhaps the Olga Korbut type of thing, running, the agony of it, the pride of winning, the whole business. It's very much a matter of discussion. On the other hand, with composers who you don't have such

a close working relationship with you'd sit down and do a brief. Perhaps we'd say 'we'd like you to do an album of compositions covering modern travel and the space age. As on opening picture think of a shot of Concorde in the distance, with that heat haze and the plane taking off and coming up above you... We'd like a track like that from you because we're always getting people coming in asking for music for that sort of picture'.

This is in fact another way we get ideas: people come to us asking for music to go behind certain pictures. If we don't have anything suitable we make a note that we must get someone to cover that sort of field. I suppose that composers must know that certain notes or certain chords project certain moods and it amazes me how marvellous the sounds can be when we hear the results of what they've been doing.

Here Ron Singer gives some details on a particular recording session for an album with a 'prestigious', 'futuristic', important or 'industrial' character. He picks out the album *Predictions, Part One* (KPM 1233). The track Ron plays is by Francis Monkton and is called *Passajig*. On the album sleeve it is described as 'a powerful, arresting theme'. To my ears this is quite a powerful and original piece in quick 6/8 tempo with a quaver riff on synthesisers in metronomic disco style over which a church organ plays strong, loud minor-modal chords every dotted crochet or minim on full Great. The organ sound has been phased. The periodicity is irregular, consisting of nine-bar (4+5) phrases. This section is interspersed by quartal fanfare figures on brass accompanied by closely miked compressed timpani playing 4 against 6).

Actually, neither this piece nor the whole album worked. The organ was recorded in a church and the rest was done in the studio.

At this point the conversation was interrupted for a tea break.

Do you know the Italian Library called CAM?

Yes, it's funny you should mention them because we got a thing from them the other day asking us if we wanted to buy.....

[short phone interruption]

Where were we?

You were talking about CAM.

Oh, yes. CAM is interesting because it's a case where they've got a lot of existing film music.

Some of it's not bad, don't you think?

Well, we do have some of it in our other library, the Conroy library

which includes both more old fashioned material and some ethnic music too. There are very few libraries that have any good collections of English traditional tunes, but we do have that in Conroy. We've got Greek, Spanish, Swiss, German and all sorts of ethnic stuff on there but funnily enough it's difficult to get hold of Scandinavian material.

Really? There's some really good traditional music over there. I'll send you some to listen to if you like.

But do you think it would say anything?...

...To someone in Ashby-de-la-Zouch? No. I don't think the average Englishman, Frenchman or US-American would know that the music was Scandinavian at all. It's a shame really, because it's very good music and it always seems to be that way with minority cultures – either they're ignored or they just provide a sort of generally exotic twang.

It's always difficult to know what a piece is going to mean to anyone else. Let me play you an example here. What sort of pictures do you get from this?

Ron puts on a track which consists of strings playing tremoli trills and fast, dissonant broken chords in multi-part clusters. The music rises and falls dramatically in glissandi, in ordinary changes of register and with crescendi and diminuendi. There are numerous *sul ponte* passages too.

I think it suggests threatening swarms of bees, locusts, or possibly the seething nervousness of someone going completely crazy.

[Ron hands me the album. The piece was *Swarm Clouds* by Tony Hymas and was described on the record sleeve as 'threatening, confused, swarming shapes', from the album *Wessex Tales and Elements* (KPM 1216).

You see, the only thing that says 'Dutch' to the average movie goer in music is *Tulips from Amsterdam*. That's different from Greek music which sounds Greek to practically everybody or Spanish music which sounds definitely Spanish.

It's true, but Swedish music sounds Swedish and Norwegian music sounds Norwegian. Music from the middle of Sweden sounds different to that from the south and so on. You've got to know the idiom to be able to understand what it represents on that level and it's a shame that people don't know these pieces of musical code much outside folk circles in Scandinavia. That doesn't mean to say that new bits of musical code can't be learnt. I don't know how it is in your library, but in the Boosey & Hawkes library, they don't have anything in the

Flûte Indienne *vein as far as I can gather. So, if you wanted to do a film in the 'poor South-American Indian' genre from the slums of Lima, Santiago or from repression in the high Andes, you couldn't. That's probably because their South American stuff was recorded before Los Incas and Simon & Garfunkel popularised that particular style and certainly before exile Chilean groups of the Victor Jara/Violetta Parra school came to Europe as refugees. So the Boosey pieces under the heading 'Exotic – South America' are of the happy carnival or Martinis-on-the-terrace-Bossa-Nova character.⁷ Both these pieces would of course be quite unsatisfactory behind a documentary about fascist terror in Chile. Anyhow, what I'm trying to say is that there are musical ideas that people recognise but which can be pieces of musical information learnt at a later stage. It's in this sort of connection that I'd like to ask you how you get wind of new musical styles for your library.*

I think it's often the composer who might say 'I heard this marvellous thing the other day and I might try to do something like that'. A lot of library material is done 'in the style of' ..., although a good composer doesn't want to work on too close a formula: he wants to be creative. Still, to be realistic, we have to say to a composer sometimes 'do something that sounds like *Tubular Bells*', because a few years ago everybody was asking for *Tubular Bells*. Nowadays we're on to Tomita, *Snowflakes are Dancing*, you know. People hear the music in terms of what they've seen in a film or of their records at home. This means we have to ask composers to do music in the style of someone else.

Surely this means that you'll always be following a trend, never creating one yourselves here at the library?

I think that trumpet thing we heard is pretty innovative.⁸

Yes, that's true, although the titles to ITV's series about the history of Christianity was in a similar vein.⁹

Do you use any particular criteria for classifying pieces under particular headings in your catalogue? I mean, is there anything special that makes you decide whether one particular piece should go under the 'Pastoral', 'Space' or 'drama' heading, for example?

Somebody might submit a piece that we would see as being good for a

7. There are only two pieces under this heading in the Boosey & Hawkes catalogue, entitled *Babassu* ('romantic sultry') and *Ballyhoo in Bogotà* ('Sunny Fiesta'), see Boosey & Hawkes catalogue, late 1970s, p.70.

8. *Passajig* by Francis Monkton (see p. p.10).

9. 'The Christians', British TV series, c. 1978-9, introduced by Bamber Gascoigne.

'nature' production, for example. He might have written the piece with something else in mind – and this very often happens – whereas we who deal with the people working with the pictures visualise the music fitting other pictures much better than the ones he had in mind while writing the music. He might have given the music a title quite different to the one we eventually choose for it. As long as he gets the money, this is the main thing, I should imagine. We don't very often find composers testing our judgement...

Reception rings up to announce the arrival of someone involved in producing a promotion film about a home movie projector. The film in question has an important selling argument in that it is supposed to show that the projector not only has high picture quality but also excellent sound reproduction. Thus it was important for the visitor to the KPM library that afternoon to find music which would show off the projector's sound to the best advantage. However, calculating that one in five or ten projectors might, in the words of the visitor, be a 'maverick' (i.e. have sub-standard sound reproduction), it was important that the music chosen should not reveal any possible 'wow' (variations in rate of film feed resulting in instability of pitch). This technical consideration meant avoiding pieces with long held chords and notes.

The first sequence requiring music pictured tankers and ships from the air and the visitor used phrases like 'shimmering waves', 'lots of boats' to suggest the mood required. Ron went straight to pieces like *National Heritage 7* which included 'glistening', repetitive celesta sus4 chords of the *Tubular Bells* type with prestigious but short horn (a 4) melodic figures underneath. This piece had the advantage of being stretchable into a loop for the exact length of the sequence required on film. This was, however, not the sort of mood our visitor required. He seemed to be looking for something less quartal, less modern. A more traditional piece of grandiose music was suggested from the tape library. That turned out to be too long.

VISITOR: *What about some of your old sports marches, Ron?*

Do you really think that would work?

VISITOR: *That's what they used for this sort of view, isn't it?*

They didn't come on at the beginning like in your film: they were for the commentary. You won't find that sort of short and concise musical statement you're looking for in that sort of material, but I'll play you a sports march if you like.

VISITOR: *It doesn't matter, because we can always fade it out. Anyhow, to be honest, I don't think the chances are very big that they'll use the music at the*

start of the film.

Ron plays a new tape containing a really corny 6/8 sports march of the old BBC *Sports Report* type.

VISITOR: *That's the sort of thing, that tune that comes up after the intro.*

Crumbs! The film will have to be in black and white.

It is in black and white.

The perky strings and brass from the late forties or early fifties continue. The visitor starts to sing along with the 6/8 march tune and is obviously happy that he has found the music he wanted.

VISITOR: *That's the sort of feel, Ron: You know, 'the show must go on', old and corny, really good, that's the right feel!*

I am at still confused since this old-style music is far from suitable for demonstrating good sound reproduction on his projector, due to the boxed-in mono sound of the tape. Moreover the music suggests black and white film which will hardly enhance the colour qualities of the projector either. Thus, while the visitor leaves for a moment to phone his office, Ron explains the situation.

Their film starts in block and white. On to the screen comes a picture of a screen in an old type of movie house.

I suppose they wants to create a sense of distance in time so as to use the 'before' and 'after' type of publicity stunt, sort of like 'Look how corny films were before and compare it to how good our projector is now, both sound and vision'.

The visitor returns. Ron suggests the impressive *Passajig* piece he had played earlier as a possible accompaniment for the same opening sequence. This suggestion meets with no enthusiasm from the visitor.

VISITOR: *No. What I think would be good would be the first sort of 'diddiddid-diddidee' thing.*

You mean the twinkle?

Here they are referring to the reiterated celesta broken chords à la *Tubular Bells* played earlier (see p. 12).

VISITOR: *Yes, that's it. Start with that twinkling and then go into one of those very corny old sports marches. Can you put that on a cassette for me? I think there's the right feel in that 'National Enterprise' thing too. I'll play it to the producer and see what he says.*

If you think that tinkling thing is a good idea, let me play you some more stuff.

Ron plays some synthesiser pieces, one with 3 against 2 figures, another in extremely fast tempo. While these are being played I ask the visitor:

Is this still for the aerial shot of tankers?

VISITOR: *Yes, what happens is that you go over a tanker, then you see a pleasure liner. It's basically just some aerial shots over the sea, that's all.*

Right, here's something for those boats, that sea and the dialogue.

Ron plays something which the visitor turns down as 'too modernistic and melodramatic' and another piece à la *Tubular Bells* which is considered 'too slow and too long'. More *Tubular Bells* pieces are rejected as being 'too much "Fairies in the Glen", too magical, too mystical', etc.

Can't you give me more on exact idea of what you want?

VISITOR: *OK, I'll try to think of a piece of music I know which might have the same sort of feel about it.*

Do you want a sea feel to it?

VISITOR: *Not necessarily. I think it's got to be rich. It depends which way we're going to play it. If that ba – ba-ba – ba-ba-ba thing¹⁰ you were playing just now develops into a fanfare, then that would be right.*

It doesn't.

VISITOR: *It's tricky, I'm sorry. I've given you two problems. One is to find something that has its own theme and the second that it should lead in to my alternative.¹¹*

Ron suggests and demonstrates one or two more pieces but these are rejected because 'they do not have enough march rhythm'. The visitor seems to be looking for a positive shimmer which can build up into his corny march.¹²

After this Ron finds a synthesiser piece with stable 12/8 rhythm. It includes quartal chords, synthesised drums and fanfarish melodic figures. This time the visitor is more impressed and asks for the piece to be put on a cassette together with the other suggestions selected so far. However, no 'shimmers' or constant twinkling, tinkling figures were to be heard in this last example.

10. Here the visitor is referring to the irregular rhythmic accompaniment figure from the recently demonstrated 'Tubular Bells' pastiches.

11. His alternative was the corny old sports march.

12. For discussion of shimmer (twinkle, tinkle, etc.) in music, see. Tagg (1979): 107-121.

Our visitor finally ended up with the following pieces on his cassette. These were to be used for the opening sequences: [1] *National Enterprise 1*, which ends with a sustained note allowing a cut or mix from the film title into the screen-on-screen sequence in black and white; [2] *National Enterprise 3* and *National Enterprise 5*, both slightly shorter introductory fanfares than no.1 (above) and possibly the right length for the title pictures; [3] The corny 6/8 march for the 'Movietone News' feel of bad sound and vision from yesteryear; [4] The synthesiser piece in regular 12/8 time with synthesised drums and fanfarish melodic figures.

Ron and the visitor then proceed to find music for the 'opening flowers' sequence. Ron puts on a soft flute and clarinet duet in post-Debussy whole-tone style. This the visitor finds 'too mystical'. The next piece is richly reverbed and chordal, full of Fender piano arpeggios and legato flute phrases. This is turned down because of the risk of wow on projectors.

VISITOR: *I don't want to take the risk. I need a piece which won't reveal any wow, even on a maverick projector. We don't want to lose any clients. Let's try and get rid of strings, flute, piano and long notes because they tend to be the worst for wow. It doesn't leave you much, I suppose, if you want pretty sounds because you can really only get that from strings, flute and piano.*

There's still harpsichord and 'pretty picking' on acoustic guitar.

Ron goes off to look for music of this type...

VISITOR: *You see, they're supposed to be the most fantastic 16 mm projectors ever produced and one of the things they're selling them on is that the sound is brilliant. That's true of 90 - 95% of their product, but you might get a maverick projector, you see, and I want to be on the safe side with a 90% chance of the music coming off even then.*

That's difficult isn't it?

VISITOR: *Yes, and I'm afraid I don't know the answer.*

Your music will have to move fast if you want to avoid wow and flowers don't move fast.

Pretty shots need pretty music, so...

VISITOR: *OK, Ron. If they show it on a maverick projector that's their fault for defying the Trades Description Act, so I wouldn't bother too much about it.*

Well. Let's try some of that guitar.

Ron puts on an LP he has just retrieved from the library. All are recorded by John Renbourn. Ron plays about 30 seconds from each track. All include typical John Renbourn sounds, complete with lightly picked but rhythmic arpeggios over pleasant maj7, sus4 and similar chords, with the guitar tuned in certain instances to facilitate the folksy drone effect used by English musicians of the new folk wave of the sixties, prior to Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, e.g. Jansch, John Martyn and, of course, Renbourn himself. Melodic phrases on the album were provided by either flute, recorder, female voices ('la-la' wordless) or another acoustic guitar overdub. This record is 'pretty' but presents less wow risk. Nevertheless, despite the slight risk of wow on the flute tunes on the album, the visitor asks to have one of these transferred to his demonstration cassette. Another track is rejected as being a direct crib of 'Strawberry Fair'.¹³

At this point the tape runs out. Eventually the visitor leaves reasonably satisfied with enough music for the two sequences. It is time for me to leave as well.

13. The number the visitor is referring to is actually *Scarborough Fair* (recorded by Simon and Garfunkel). The 'Strawberry', however, is highly apposite for the sort of sweet, delicate, herbal, sunny, bucolic, horticultural atmosphere being sought for in the music.

2. Bruton Music (London)

This interview with Robin Philips took place on Tuesday, 11th March, 1980 in the main office of Bruton Music in Mayfair, London.

How and why was Bruton Music started?

I think I should start talking about how music libraries were started as a whole because that's much more interesting. In the early days of film, all the music was either specially written or it come out of the music publisher's catalogue. Then came the newsreel. In England there were about six newsreel companies producing their films once, twice, even three times a week. All the music used for newsreels was of standard format. It would have to fit an occasion like the opening of parliament, a sports event, an air display, or they might have been talking about leisure and bank holidays. Like I said, it was all standard format stuff and the newsreel companies realised that they couldn't afford to have an orchestra in the studio three times a week since all of the music was basically the same. So the newsreel people went to the music publishers who at the time were producing vast amounts of light orchestral music for use on radio. There were lots of radio orchestras at the time, and records were hardly used at all. It was all orchestral stuff and consisted of happy things, ceremonial Elgar pieces and so forth. The newsreel people found that the orchestral stuff on radio was ideal for using behind a newsreel. That's when and how the light orchestral catalogue started being recorded – for the newsreel companies who paid for every time they used a piece.

When did all that take place? In the thirties or forties?

In the thirties.

You mentioned Elgar and a sort of light, happy orchestral music. Would the latter be things in the Leroy Anderson vein?

Yes, all the sort of standard light orchestra pieces with the standard line-up.

What about brass bands? Were they used for sports events?

Not at that time. There were of course sports marches but they would be played by the light orchestra – you know, strings with some woodwind, a bit of brass and percussion. That went on for about twenty years without changing until the real advent of television. You see, up

to the fifties all the dramatic music for feature films was specially composed because there was no ready-made music which could have been pre-synced, edited and so on: it really went straight down. However, when the magnetic tape and television arrived with all the cheap programmes and so on, it then became possible to overdub prerecorded music. We had then a new situation where the user wasn't looking for music for *Look at Life*¹⁴ or newsreels, but was doing drama series, animated programmes for children and so on.

Another reason was that the television user didn't have the budget for an orchestra in the studio. So instead he went along to the music publishers and music libraries and said 'I don't want these sports marches; I need stuff for children's animation, I need some dramatic stuff'. So then we started making that sort of music. Now the whole thing has become much more sophisticated. In the worldwide market of television and in the cheaper sort of film industry I suppose about half, or even more, up to three quarters probably, of all the music used is either from a recorded music library which makes music only for that purpose, or is from ordinary gramophone recordings which can range from the classical repertoire through to Pink Floyd and contemporary electronic groups.

What about the advent of music for commercials on television? Didn't this also contribute to the boom of the music libraries?

No, not really, because it was the some sort of music which was used for ordinary television series or sponsored films. A large part of our industry is to make music for the sponsor. He has to pay the bill and he has to make a film about his activities, whether it's building ships, dams or plastic cups. He has to prove to the audience that he's got it right and that his product's the best in the market. It's the same situation as with an advertising agency or with a television director who maybe wants to make a documentary about the Fastnet Race and has beautiful shots of the boats. Perhaps he has a storm too. Well, he wants the music to show off the film at all costs. At the end of the day he wants his film to be seen as the best film ever made about that subject. So the music has to sell the film.

14. *Look at Life* was a sort of trivial news-cum-entertainment film journal produced by the Rank Organisation. It was usually inserted between feature films in British cinemas in the fifties and early sixties, occupying the spot previously occupied by Pathé or Movietone newsreels before the spread of TV.

Who are your main clients?

The world of television, the advertising agencies and independent filmmakers doing mostly non-features, i.e. documentaries, instructional films. Audiovisuals, you know, slides and the automated presentation system are also important these days. The great thing is that you don't need a crew, just a bloke with a camera who goes round clicking away. Then you just put the pictures together of, let's say, your factory, and make a really nice presentation with automatic slow or fast dissolves, plus the music, sound effects and dialogue. You then have virtually a movie at about one eighth of the price.

Can that be done on stereo these days?

Yes, but you have to do it on a four-track recorder like a TEAC.

Do you do any tailor-made stuff for people or do you just advise them as to what they can use out of your catalogue?

No. Of course, we do market research into the sort of material people want and into trends, whether it's a trend in music or the sort of presentation or production the music will be needed for. For example, we've been through a spate of historical drama for television and there has been a great demand for period music, so we chase people to find out what's going on and to supply music which will be suitable in a generic way.

Taking classical music as a case in point, do you have that in your catalogue at all or do you commission pastiches or pieces in a given historical style to fit the bill instead?

All the classical repertoire is public domain and is therefore available to the television industry. We try to create period music in eras, you know, aimed at the 16th century, aimed at the 17th century, aimed at the 1920s, the turn of the century, the medieval, or whatever. The music is written either straight as a suite or in atmospheres, you know, -eerie music, horseback chases, armies on the march and so on.

How much of your material is taken from outside and contracted into the catalogue and how much of it is commissioned?

It is all commissioned.

How do you go about finding a composer to do an album consisting of a certain type of music? Do you find new composers for new concept productions?

Since we are in a situation where we issue practically everything we record, we are forced to use experienced talent. We can't breed talent

here because we don't have enough money to experiment with new faces. So one of our jobs is to find composers and experienced talent of the best calibre, whether it's rock, orchestral stuff, lute solos or church organ music. We chase the best talent.

So all the composers in this line of business will be freelance, not under contract to one particular library?

Most of the composers are freelance but work with a particular publisher. If you look at our library, it's only real identity is its writers, so we try and use our own composers as much as possible. OK, they're not restricted to writing for us but they choose to have a home here. As long as we can give them enough work and enough money out of this specialised area to satisfy them, they see no reason why they should go chasing round publishers to get work.

Does your income come solely from royalties, or do you sell the discs in your library at all?

Purely out of royalties, from the use of our repertoire. The records aren't for sale in the shops. We supply our foreign agents with the collection and they pay something towards the cost of the plastic, the postage and so on, but all our earnings come from the use of the music. There are no other magic sources.

I only asked you that because there are some libraries, like Valentino in New York, who do actually sell their records.

Yes, there are some in America because there wasn't much copyright control over there, probably because of the diversification of the broadcasting industry all over the place there and the lack of control over informing anybody what they were using. So the only way the old record libraries could make any money was either as outright sales or to take out on annual blanket fee. We we don't do that at all. The user has to pay for every time he uses the music at the scheduled rates. You go through the MCPS and the PRS. They'll send you a copyright license and a bill at the same time.

I'd like to ask you how you got started here. You see, I was phoning round publishers in Stockholm trying to find the Scandinavian agents for the Italian CAM library and got wind of your existence through the Ehrlingförlagen. I ordered your catalogue from them. I was impressed by your tidy classification system and thought 'hm, I must go and see them'. As I understand it, you're quite new here, so why did you start? Weren't there enough libraries in the market?

Well, I've worked on this side of the business for the last twelve years and have learnt the hard way by making lots of mistakes. True, it's an over-saturated market in the sense that you can go into the BBC gramophone library and find that they have hundreds and hundreds of hours of atmospheric music of all sorts which is already available to them under their blanket agreement with the MCPS and PRS. Even so, I've thought for the last few years that if the job were done properly there would be room for one more, only one more major company. So when this company made a decision that, if the right composers and right people were available, they would be prepared to inject enough capital into the rapid build-up of another library, I jumped at the opportunity. It's always what I've wanted to do. You see, the problem with this sort of library is that it is quite manageable when it only contains a few records, but as it grows it becomes more and more of a needle-in-the-haystack situation. Then nobody has time to go through the hundreds of hours of music in the catalogue, most of which will be out-of-date and have too poor sound quality. Then you've lost the purpose of the library which is to provide an instant source of music. This is why people use stock music, you see, because it isn't just a budget problem, it can be a time problem too.

The way things work is that you've got a non-musical producer or director who, like I said earlier, doesn't know how to explain what he hears or sees. If he leaves it up to a composer he might well get lumbered with music he doesn't like when it's finished. At least he'll know whether he likes the music or not when it's already recorded. So what he does instead is to go to a stock music library and say, for example, 'I'm looking for music for this new current affairs programme — I don't know what I want, but I will if I hear it'. He'll listen to one piece and say 'I don't like that', to another where he says the same thing until he comes to a piece which he thinks will be just right. At our library we're just trying to make it easier for him to be able to listen to all the alternatives we have to offer for a particular use without having to plough through millions of tapes, albums, album covers and vast catalogues.

How do you intend to keep the volume down?

By not duplicating.

So you complement other libraries, then?

No, not at all. We try and complement our own library. For example, having done an album of Irish music we probably won't do another

one in the foreseeable future. We try to spread our range rather than duplicate what we have done ourselves. We'd rather spread horizontally than vertically, so to speak. Having done Ireland we might go on to the West of England, the North of England, Northern France or whatever. This is all part of the standard catalogue.

What is meant by the 'standard catalogue'?

For instance, 'have you got bagpipe music?', 'have you got *Green-sleeves*? It's all the ethnic music, it's brass bands, it's steel bands. In fact it's all the specifics department. Another example would be 'have you got a riding arpeggio on a harp?', 'have you got a faster one than that?', 'have you got a taste bud?', 'I want a taste bud that just goes "ping"'. There are all sorts of standard things like that. Christmas carols are in the standard catalogue too, in fact anything apart from the guy who comes in and says 'I want something completely new that isn't in any particular known style or any established theme'.

So if I wanted the John Barry/James Bond style, that would be in the standard catalogue?

Yes.

I'm just wondering how you go about keeping your catalogue up to date. You see, I was trying to write this study of an Abba a song and wanted to see if music of the El Condor Pasa type – you know, Simon and Garfunkel, La flûte indienne, etc. – appeared in library music catalogues under a heading like Ethnic. Well, it did in an Italian and a German catalogue,¹⁵ but not in Boosey's catalogue, despite the fact that this sort of music had been going round for five or six years at that time. How do you avoid this sort of thing happening to you?

Well, we had to do something like that with the West Indies. We're putting an album together right now of ska and reggae. Reggae itself is a changing music and we're doing a contemporary reggae album of what's happening now in West Indian music. On the other side of the record there'll be the old-fashioned steel band stuff, which is still wanted. Still, what we're trying to do here is to make ethnic music more of an authentic folk style rather than orchestral pastiches of the real thing.

What would you say were the advantages of your library over the others?

15. CAM (Rome) and Selected Sounds (Hamburg).

It is designed for the world of the audiovisual media as it is now rather than as it was twenty years ago. The problem with the other large catalogues is that they've been slowly built up over the years and a lot of their material isn't valid any more: perhaps one day it will become archive material and have that sort of value. So the other libraries have a lot of padding in them.

Then there's the problem of old recordings where the sound isn't that fantastic. You see, for nearly twenty years there's been the problem of not being able to record music for the libraries in London because the Musicians' Union were all against any prerecorded music being available at that time. Before that, all the libraries had an agreement with the Musicians' Union, but that agreement was suddenly cancelled. So the music libraries had to go overseas to record material. Lots of problems in making music are a question of environment. If you don't have the right environment, if you don't have the right musicians and the right studio facilities, what you end up with will not really be competitive. So we found ourselves winding up in weird and wonderful places like Brussels, Budapest and Stuttgart, not being able to hand-pick musicians. We were fortunate enough here (at Bruton) to renegotiate a deal with the Musicians' Union which enabled us to record the whole library here in London, apart from certain ethnic stuff which obviously has to come from overseas. So we've been able to build our library up in the right environment.

You see, here [in London] you have a large selection of musicians, whereas in Brussels, for example, although the musicians are by no means sub-standard, you only really have one brass section to choose from, and if they're working in the radio orchestra at the same time as you were trying to make your library recording, you would be in real trouble: You've got a wider choice of studios, too [in London]: wet studios, dry studios, large studios, small studios, etc.

How come your company managed to negotiate this deal with the British Musicians' Union?

I think that the Musicians' Union had realised that their embargo on sessions of prerecorded music hadn't solved the problem at all. All it meant was that the stuff was imported rather than being made here. I suppose another reason was that we were in a unique situation in that we were not just adding to existing repertoire. No, we were going to record a lot of music and we are a British based company, whereas a number of libraries around London are German based or half Ameri-

can owned or whatever. So we offered the union a deal. We said 'we'll spend a lot of money: we can either do it here or on the continent. We'll pay a high fee, too'.

There's obviously a high degree of musicianship required at your recording sessions, isn't there? I mean, under such conditions you'll expect it to sound good after the first take, won't you?

We do twenty minutes in recording session.

That sounds like take one to me.

But they'll have about two rehearsals before that.

Earlier, you mentioned the reggae record with its flip side of steel band stuff. Do you have any other projects, any other trends you think you should be covering at present?

We're continually trying to cover the trends, however apparent they are. I mean, there's the disco thing which we did cover the last few years, but now it's gone.

But won't that mean, contrary to what you said earlier – you know, about 'padding' in other libraries – , that you'll either have to delete or archive that material now that it's out of date?

There's not much point in that, really, because once a record of disco sound from the library is out in a television station in Sweden, for example, there's not much point in our writing to you and asking you for the record back. They can throw it away or tear out the catalogue page and do what they like with it. They don't have to pay anything if they're not using it.

But still, won't you end up like the other libraries in a number of years with a certain amount of dead material?

Inevitably, but things get much less out of date these days because the recording quality is as good as it is ever likely to get. None of the standard catalogue stuff will ever date and a lot of the contemporary stuff will rapidly become archive material instead. So if you have a play set in 1973 and you want some music for it, even the old contemporary stuff will have its value.

Were you in the publishing business before you started with library music?

Yes.

I'd like to ask you about one or two points in your catalogue. You see, some headings you'll find in practically every catalogue whereas others are more

specific to one library. For example, I was trying to find the sort of sentimental minor-add-9 type of themes in the pathétique vein, so looked under 'sadness' in your catalogue. But in that section you have solo instruments, not only harp and flute, but also percussion. Why is that?

Well, there aren't any hard and fast boundaries between the categories. We try and use a system where the categories will gradually go in and out of each other. For example: you have 'neutral' and 'solo instruments' which gradually go into 'leisure' and from 'children' (which I suppose is quite a light category) you go into something bright but heavier which is 'comedy' and really happy. Then you come out of there into the 'grandiose', and so on. In other words, half of it is supposed to run into each other and 'sadness' isn't a very good category really because we don't have much call for 'sadness'. At the same time, an individual solo instrument very often describes one particular character or individual, which in itself implies solitude, and if you're into solitude you're often talking about sadness. It's awfully easy to imply sadness by one solo oboe or guitar. It's not so easy to imply sadness with a whole orchestra.

I don't know if I agree with you there. What I was thinking about was the sort of Morricone or Legrand type or large, melodic, orchestral, sentimental sadness in the minor key. Bitter-sweet, if you prefer. You know, The Summer of '42, Les parapluies de Cherbourg, bits out of 1900 and so on.

I think our end of the business is a small bridge over the canal rather than an enormously big vista over the Golden Gate. We're much more small-screen orientated and people don't tend to want the grandiose stuff so much, unless they ask for something grandiose, of course. Generally they want smaller sounds for the smaller screens. We hardly ever get into that situation.

I was thinking about the sort of situation where someone might be doing a TV commercial and want perhaps a nice, sentimentally tense love theme or something.

We'd put the 'sentimental' as a spill-over into the 'romantic', 'leisure' or 'tender' area.

If you go into the 'leisure' area of different libraries, I think there's quite a difference between what the French and Italians do, on the one hand, and what the English or German libraries include under that sort of section. As I mentioned, the Italians have a sort of mood they describe as patetico and the German or English catalogues seem to miss this totally.

It's peculiar, but the sort of music in French or Italian libraries is much more orientated towards emotional underscores which we can't really sell here. They're more emotional and sadder whereas the music here tends more to be in a major key and is there to impress and sell something rather than to depress. So the Italian and French libraries don't really sell here in the English speaking countries and I don't think any of the Northern European countries go in for that sort of thing much either: it's weird.

Yes, it's strange, but I suppose on the popular music side that bitter-sweet sentimental style and straightforward rock and roll are my two big favourites.

Before you go, let me play you some of the more successful stuff we've done. Here's something that's been picked over and over again by all sorts of people.

At this point Robin Philips puts on a track by Alan Hawkshaw entitled *Terrestrial Journey* (see example, p. p.27), described in the catalogue as 'spacious' and included on the LP *Terrestrial Journey* which comprises a series of pieces described as 'a contemporary suite depicting time and space passage'. All this is part of Bruton's 'Futuristic, Electronic' category. The piece in question is a sort of sped up, electronic, synthesised tonal piece, slightly reminiscent of the main theme from *Star Wars*, yet not so heroically prestigious and grandiose. However, it is more spacious and futuristic than John Williams' Straussian sonorities. We get as far as two main musical ideas. The first (extract 1, below) is a bright positive bitonal shimmer, quite light but with plenty of reverb. It is interspersed with short but energetic, totally diatonic, positive phrases played using a trumpet-like synth preset (extract 2). These phrases are then taken over by horn a 4 registrations on synthesiser. These figures (see ex. p.27) are even more fanfarish than the previous ones. Then more pieces of a similar type are played.

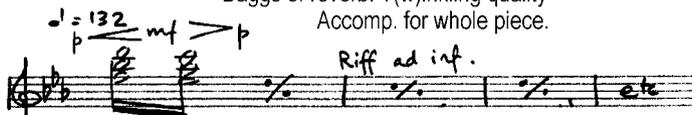
What kind of instructions did you give Alan Hawkshaw when commissioning this LP? Did you say you wanted so or so many tracks of this or that length with a particular character, or what?

I suppose the brief is much more involved with what the use of the music is going to be rather than with the number of tracks and so on. So we have to think about what ingredients to put in the album, why it would be used when it comes to the crunch, and work backwards from there.

So what would he hear from you as regards this piece, for example, just to take a case in point?

Extracts from Alan Hawkshaw's *Terrestrial Journey* (Bruton BRI/A2, 1979)

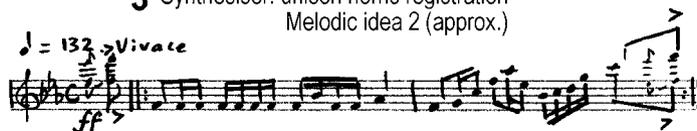
- 1 Moog sequencer through phase unit (slow).
Bags of reverb. T(w)inkling quality
Accomp. for whole piece.



- 2 Synthesiser: trumpet registration. Melodic idea 1 (approx.)



- 3 Synthesiser: unison horns registration
Melodic idea 2 (approx.)



What we would try to imply in all the excerpts you heard would obviously be first of all energy – which means really trying to do things. Then there's a bit of prestige and putting it into a serious vein rather than a jokey one. We'd perhaps ask him to make it very contemporary, aiming at the future rather than reflecting what's happening now, you know, so that there's a feel of things to come. That's how we'd start talking. It's a question of pre-empting what people need and then trying to get round it musically.

This sort of need that people have, how do you get wind of that? Do you do any market research into that sort of thing?

Market research is obviously a part of it, but honestly the main ideas come out of actually listening to music yourself. You have to hear what's actually going on around you or see something in a film. For example, there was *Shaft* which was a breakthrough on the rhythm field and everybody jumped on to the bandwagon.

Yes, and they even jumped on that bandwagon in Sweden and used Shaft as signature for their TV sports magazine. As the final wah-wah chord dies out they sometimes show a frozen sunlit spray from a water-skier, which I suppose is a bit corny, but effective. Anyhow, getting back to the composer's brief: is there much discussion in musical terms when you talk to each other?

No, we don't really talk musically, purely because the composer is the musician and presumably knows much better than we do how to say whatever has to be said in musical terms. So we never suggest tunes or chord sequences, whether it should be in the major or minor and so on, although obviously we do talk in terms of line-ups. Should the composition be electronic or not? How much can we afford? How large an orchestra can we use? These are the sort of questions we will have to ask before giving a brief but from there on in we leave the composer alone. Then it's really his job.

3. Éditions Montparnasse 2000 (Paris)

Cet entretien du 20 mars, 1980, a eu lieu dans le bureau de Mme Béladel, secrétaire aux Éditions Montparnasse 2000, 27 rue Bréa à Montparnasse, Paris.

Qu'est-ce qui vous a amenée à exercer ce métier?

C'est très simple. J'ai fait des études musicales. J'ai passé un bac musical et j'ai fait un an de conservatoire. Quand tu sors du conservatoire tu te demandes quoi faire. Les débouchés ne sont pas faciles et il faut avoir beaucoup de relations en France, parce que sans relations on n'arrive à rien. Comme j'étais absolument obligée de travailler, je me suis dit 'pourquoi pas choisir une branche qui se rapprocherait de la musique?' Et je commençais pas faire de la publicité.

Donc, vous travailliez avec la musique dans les publicités?

Non, aucun rapport avec la musique: je faisais mise-en-page à la pub, ce qui était un remplacement, et quand je suis partie de là j'ai passé une petite annonce dans le journal. J'ai eu beaucoup de réponses. J'ai fait une sélection de tout ce qui se rapportait à l'édition musicale et, entre autre, comme j'habite ce quartier, et que c'était tout près de chez moi, je suis venue ici.

Combien êtes-vous ici?

On est très peu. On a le président qui est le directeur général, on a un directeur commercial, et puis une secrétaire qui est moi-même. Voilà.

Et les autres, qu'est-ce qui les a amenés à faire ce métier?

L'un d'eux, c'était un ancien accompagnateur: il jouait de la batterie. Il ne faisait pas ça très sérieusement. Il avait sa femme, ses enfants. Il lui fallait trouver une situation un peu plus stable. Il ne pouvait plus faire des tournées en province. Par l'intermédiaire d'un musicien qui était déjà là à l'édition il est arrivé chez nous.

Quand et pourquoi a-t-on fondé cette maison d'édition?

En soixante-huit ou soixante-neuf. C'était une idée d'un certain M. Maurice Siégel qui est directeur de publicité d'une grande maison de publicité en France. Le journal VSD [= vendredi, samedi, dimanche], c'est lui qui le tient. Ce M. Siégel a donné cet idée à M. Paris, mon directeur, et il lui a dit que plutôt que d'utiliser toujours les catalogues étrangers — puis qu'il n'y avait que des catalogues anglo-saxons en musique d'illustration sonore — on devrait monter sa propre musique avec des

musiciens français. Puis, il était le premier sur le marché et ça a très bien réussi. Il y a d'autres maisons qui ont par la suite des idées: ils se mettent en relation avec nous sans devenir concurrents.

Quels sont vos clients principaux ou habituels?

Sur le plan national, c'est la radio et la télévision.

Quel pourcentage des bénéfices vient de ces sources-là dans l'édition?

Disons deux tiers TV et radio ensemble. Un peu plus de TV je dirais même, parce que la radio, c'est souvent gratuite. Mais toutes les émissions télévisées sont payantes et ça fait un bénéfice dans la société qui représente à peu près les deux tiers. Et le tiers qui reste, c'est fait avec les audiovisuels. Ça se passe d'une différente manière par l'intermédiaire des entreprises qui font toutes, depuis cinq ou six ans, des formations de personnel qui se font à l'aide de diapos [= diapositive] maintenant. Il y a les industries, les différentes sociétés de l'audiovisuel qui se sont créées à droite et à gauche pour les duplications de cassette, les simples amateurs qui font des films pendant les vacances, etc.

Est-ce qu'il existe en France une législation pour les cassettes vidéo?

C'est très récent comme problème. Ça se fait beaucoup dans les shows. Vous avez à l'Olympia des chanteurs qui font des vidéocassettes plutôt que d'employer des décors, ce qui est beaucoup plus vivant. En même temps je ne sais pas si ça a un effet psychologique sur le spectateur qui, en même temps qu'il entend la musique, voit non seulement la chanteuse, mais aussi le diapo qui est derrière.

Est-ce qu'il y a eu chez vous un changement de clientèle du début jusqu'à aujourd'hui, ou est-ce que la clientèle est restée la même?

On travaille de plus en plus avec la télévision mais ils étaient tellement habitués à employer des catalogues anglo-saxons qu'ils ont continué pendant un certain nombre d'années à... je ne sais pas... Si vous écoutez la radio aujourd'hui, les trois quarts des chansons qui passent sont anglo-saxonnes et c'est plutôt récent que les gens — à la radio, à la télévision — commencent à s'intéresser à la musique tout-à-fait sans paroles des chansons qui est souvent française. Vous devez connaître ça, mais les français, contrairement aux autres, s'intéressent davantage aux paroles des chansons. Avec la variété, ça démolit tout parce que les paroles ne voulaient plus rien dire et les jeunes s'intéressent maintenant beaucoup plus au rythme, et les paroles sont devenues secondaires alors que pendant toutes les années auparavant c'était les paroles qui

comptaient le plus. La musique, ce n'était qu'un accompagnement.

Vous pensez alors que la tradition de la chanson française est en train de disparaître?

Ah oui, beaucoup, beaucoup.

C'est dommage, ça.

Oui, c'est dommage. Ils ont essayé de la relancer dernièrement sur une onde de radio et il s'est avéré que les pourcentages étaient énorme de français qui réclamaient davantage de chansons françaises avec un texte bien écrit.

Rejeter la tradition chansonnrière, c'est plutôt un phénomène parmi les jeunes?

Oui, c'était les jeunes. Vous savez que la moyenne d'âge a drôlement baissé et se situe autour de treize ou quatorze ans. On commence à avoir de l'argent de poche, on achète des disques et puis on ne tient pas compte de l'éducation qu'on a reçue des parents et les parents n'ont plus rien à dire maintenant. Même les jeunes dans la variété commencent à chanter de la même manière qu'ils parlent, c'est-à-dire que ce n'est plus du tout un français littéraire, c'est plutôt presque de l'argot.

Mais Brassens a bien déjà fait ça. Il a employé pas mal d'argot dans ces chansons, n'est-ce pas?

Oui, mais ça avait un certain esprit alors que maintenant les nouveaux chanteurs comme Bel Avoine — c'est le nouveau produit sur le marché — ça marche très fort et il n'y a que le rythme qui compte. Les paroles sont vraiment secondaire, heureusement parce que ça ne veut rien dire! Remarquez, si vous essayez de traduire certaines chansons des Beatles aussi...

Vos bénéfices viennent de la vente de disque ou des redevances de la SACEM?

Aucun bénéfice sur la vente des disques, étant donné que si un client se présente ici on lui donne les disques qu'il cherche, sauf quand c'est un amateur qui arrive chez nous tous les trois ans; dans ce cas-là on lui vend le disque à prix commercial. Autrement on ne les vend pas du tout. C'est parce que le client normal est amené à faire d'autres audiovisuels et ça nous sert de promotion au même temps et ce qu'on facture ne sont pas le pressage ou l'enregistrement du disque sous la forme de vente mais l'utilisation de la musique.

Vous avez des tarifs spéciaux à vous?

Les tarifs sont fixés par la SACEM tous les ans et le droit de la propriété

phonographique, c'est-à-dire le droit qui rembourse un peu le pressage et la création de la pochette, etc., plus, bien sûr, un pourcentage de bénéfice très minime. En dehors de ça vous avez aussi la SACEM à qui vous devez payer nos redevances parce que la SACEM régit les droits d'auteur et de compositeur. Grâce à ces droits, les compositeurs touchent sous forme d'honoraire tous les six mois ce que leur disque leur rapportent en fonction de produit. C'est-à-dire : si ce n'est pas employé ils ne toucheront rien.

Dans de tels cas, que faites-vous? Vous supprimez des titres moins utilisés de votre catalogue, ou vous gardez tout?

On les garde tous et on n'a aucun préjugé commercial. C'est-à-dire que le choix de disque est fait en général avec le client qui a créé le film, l'audiovisuel ou la vidéocassette et en fonction de ses idées à lui on essaie de l'orienter sur tel ou tel disque, parce qu'on les connaît bien, mais on ne traite pas de préférence qui viennent de sortir. On travaille toujours sur des disques qui sont sortis il y a dix ans aussi bien que sur des disques qui viennent de sortir.

Alors, ça ne se démode pas?

Ça ne se démode pas, sauf exception : dans le disco, par exemple, parce que ça, c'est une mode.

Quelle partie de vos bénéfices vient de l'étranger?

On est très mal distribué à l'étranger, en particulier dans les pays nordiques. Je suppose c'est parce que vous travaillez surtout avec des bandes, n'est-ce pas? C'est la même chose en Allemagne aussi, et je ne comprends pas pourquoi, parce que les bandes sont difficiles. Voyez, les pochettes de disque pour nous sont en de différentes couleurs et on se repère à la couleur. Comme ça on sait ce qu'il y a dans les disques. On n'a pas besoin de les sortir. Si c'est orange on sait que c'est du jazz. C'est l'audiovisuel, ça aussi!

Chez nous les effets sonores, ainsi que la musique de sonorisation, se trouvent aussi fréquemment sur des disques que sur des bandes, et votre collection se trouve chez nous à la radio de Göteborg. Je ne sais pas si on l'emploie beaucoup ou non, et je n'ai absolument aucune idée pourquoi vous seriez mal distribués chez nous. De toute façon, j'aimerais passer à une autre question.

Comment avez-vous fait pour établir une collection de base? Je veux dire que pour établir un catalogue au début il faudrait avoir une idée de ce qu'il va contenir comme ambiances musicales, genres de musique, etc. Alors, vous avez

commencé avec combien de disques, et quels ont été vos critères pour choisir si vous alliez produire, disons, des solos d'accordéon, des solos de flûte, de la musique policière, etc.? Autrement dit, est-ce que vous aviez une collection de base à laquelle vous avez ajouté peu à peu de nouvelles ambiances, de nouveaux genres?

On n'est pas spécialisé dans un genre. Ce n'est pas du tout commercial. Dans le phénomène commercial on est tout-à-fait obligé de s'adapter au goût des publiques, c'est-à-dire à ce qui est à la mode, à ce qui est en vogue, tandis que nous, c'était en fonction d'image qu'on a conçu le catalogue. Les images vous offrent une très grande étendue de choix : ça va de la nuit aux films de vacance, ou à l'Afrique où il faut des tam-tams, etc. Donc, ça nous offrait un très grand choix de musique.

On a commencé avec vingt disques — ils s'appelaient au début *jingles* bien qu'en fait à l'heure actuelle ce qu'on appelle un *jingle* ne soit pas de tout ça, c'est un morceau très court. Donc, ces disques-là offraient au client une variété de musique assez libre. Il y avait un morceau de jazz, un morceau de percussion, un plagiat d'un concert d'Albinoni. Tout ce qu'il était possible de faire on essayait de réduire en vingt disques.

Mais comment couvrir tout ce domaine en vingt disques?

Ce n'est pas possible. Il y a toujours des choses à créer. Par exemple, à l'heure actuelle on nous demande beaucoup de reggae. Ça n'existe pas dans notre collection parce que l'on a tellement été frappé par le phénomène disco qui a duré longtemps du point de vue commercial, parce qu'il en fait un bénéfice de son disque, mais nous, on n'en a pas tiré de profit du disco, parce qu'on sait très bien que si on sort un disque de disco aujourd'hui il ne sera pas utilisable demain. C'est une musique qui se démode. C'est comme le twist ou quelque chose comme ça.

Mais le disco aura peut être une valeur nostalgique dans dix ans?...

L'enregistrement de disco est très facile. Vous créez un air, puis vous y mettez toujours le même rythme, puis c'est vite démodé.

Bien sûr, mais quand-même... Je passe à autre chose... Quels compositeurs, ou plutôt quel genre de compositeur avez-vous choisi pour produire des morceaux pour votre collection? Quels sont et quels ont été vos critères pour choisir un compositeur pour créer un domaine d'ambiance spécifique?

Au début c'était facile. Il y a énormément de gens qui sortent du conservatoire et qui n'ont pas de débauché. Donc, il s'avère que ce sont des gens qui ont une culture musicale assez poussée et qui sont assez im-

pressionnante au point de vue de création et interprétation de musique. Ils ont le talent mais ils ne savent pas où se présenter pour sortir leurs disques. Alors, ce qui se passe en général, c'est qu'ils créent une bande et qu'ils nous l'apportent, ce qui quand-même leur permet ensuite de touches des droits SACEM. Donc l'éventail est assez grand parce qu'il y a énormément de gens qui sortent du conservatoire mais qui n'ont pas forcément une situation qui... Notre critère ne s'imposait pas sur un style bien défini, donc on a pris de différents auteurs-compositeurs qui n'étaient pas connus – qui ne sont pas connus à l'heure actuelle non plus, du reste – mais qui sont capables de créer, en fonction de ce que nous demande la clientèle, un certain genre de musique, voilà.

Quand décidez-vous, et qui est-ce chez vous qui décide quand il faut commander de nouveaux enregistrements pour la collection ?

Ça, c'est un problème à l'heure actuelle parce que Montparnasse 2000 est vendue et c'est un producteur allemand qui prend la suite.¹⁶ Bon, il a un certain budget et j'avoue qu'on ne sort pas de disques maintenant parce qu'on a tout ce qu'il nous faut dans le catalogue, c'est-à-dire que la musique ne va pas d'une manière si rapide qu'elle allait autrefois. Les gens sont un peu stoppés, on revient au rétro, au Charleston, des années trente, une certaine nostalgie. Nous, on a déjà tout ça dans le catalogue. Donc on ne sort rien pour le moment parce qu'il n'y a pas de création nouvelle à part le reggae.

Ces conclusions me paraissent quelque peu étranges et je propose la musique jouée au synthétiseur comme domaine de production intéressant pour une maison d'éditions illustration sonore. L'objection contre cette proposition est que la musique synthétisée n'est pas chantable, ce que démontre Mme Béladel en me demandant de chanter *Oxygène*, tube sythétisé français que j'avais entendu deux ou trois fois, dont la dernière fois trois ans avant cet entretien. Puis que je ne peux pas chanter *Oxygène* malgré sa popularité, la musique synthétisée ne paraît pas à intéresser à Mme Béladel comme nouveau domaine de création pour la musique de sonorisation. Évidemment, il y a d'autres sortes de musique peu chantables dans un catalogue d'illustration sonore ; la musique pour des situations de menace, par exemple, et je tiens à ce que la « chantabilité » ne fonctionne pas très bien comme critère d'inclusion.

Alors, si vous n'avez plus de disques à sortir maintenant, est-ce que vous avez d'autres projets ?

16. M. Wewerka

Des projets actuels, il y en a énormément du fait que la maison a été reprise par un producteur allemand.

Quels sont ces projets?

Ça reste entre nous?

Si vous le préférez.

Cet espace symbolise la partie de la conversation que Mme Béladel a voulu garder « entre nous ».

Dans quelle mesure la musique de votre collection a-t-elle été commandée directement et dans quelle mesure a-t-elle déjà été employée dans des productions audiovisuelles avant de sortir sur disque chez vous?

Je ne comprends pas votre question.

Il y a d'autres collections de musique de sonorisation dans lesquelles sont incluses des indicatifs de film, par exemple, écrits au départ pour une seule production spécifique, mais qui ont été inclus par la suite dans un certain catalogue. Alors, ça vous arrive de prendre le générique d'un film qui existe déjà et de le mettre, après la négociation des droits d'auteur, dans votre collection?

Non. On ne peut absolument pas le faire. C'est le rôle de la SACEM. À partir du moment où on dépose une oeuvre à la SACEM, il est interdit d'employer ce morceau pour en tirer profit. Ça concerne uniquement le compositeur et l'administration de la SACEM.

Mais en Italie il y a une collection qui...

En Italie c'est un problème qui se pose. C'est pour ça que la télévision italienne a énormément de difficulté à régir les droits des auteurs et des compositeurs, parce que c'est interdit oralement, mais il n'y a rien d'écrit. En Espagne c'est la même chose. C'est pour ça qu'on n'a jamais pu travailler avec la radio espagnole.

J'ai posé la question parce que je me suis rendu compte, en parcourant la collection CAM qu'une bonne partie du catalogue consistait en titres tirés de vieux films italiens. Par exemple, on y trouve pas mal de génériques de film de Morricone ...

Oui, mais c'est l'auteur-compositeur qui fait partie de l'édition. Il a souscrit un contrat avec l'édition qui leur a donné l'autorisation de presser ces disques. Si vous n'avez pas cette autorisation vous ne pouvez pas sortir ces disques.

Mais vous ne faites pas ça en France?

Si. Là on se comprend très bien.

Est-ce que vous avez des génériques écrites pour une autre production spécifique avant qu'elles fassent partie de votre collection?

Oui, de Morricone, on en a. On a du Claude Bolling aussi, et cette musique reporte à des films spécifiques.

Bon, je comprends. Dans les catalogues britanniques par contre il me semble que la plupart des compositions sont originales. Je n'en suis pas certain, mais je n'ai pas encore entendu parler de contrats avec les compositeurs de musique de film déjà en existence.

Ah non? Nous, on le fait. Mais ici c'est possible de faire de la musique originale aussi, seulement il y a une énorme différence au point de vue du prix. C'est-à-dire que celui qui veut faire de la musique originale a besoin d'un gros budget, mais il a l'assurance d'avoir un morceau qui convient parfaitement.

Dans quelle mesure votre collection consiste-t-elle en morceaux qui sont faits pour une émission spécifique?

Il y en a très peu, ou ça reste sur bande. Il y en a quelques uns. Il a un générique de feuilleton télévisé qui existe sur disque chez nous, mais c'est très rare. À partir du moment où il est pressé sur disque ce n'est plus de la musique originale parce que... un client va se présenter demain et me dire « je veux telle ou telle musique » et je penserai à ce morceau qui a été créé d'une manière originale, mais qui va être utilisé pour autre chose, alors qu'à l'origine c'était de la musique originale, parce qu'elle a été écrite pour un client, pour un produit déterminés.

Mais ne trouvez-vous pas que de telle musique se laisse appliquer moins bien dans votre catalogue quand elle faite exprès pour tel ou tel but spécifique?

Oui, c'est certain, c'est un risque. Non seulement ce risque de ne pas être tout-à-fait en rapport avec l'image, mais le risque d'entendre le morceau qui est passé pour telle diapositive sur une autre diapositive.

Vous avez combien de disques 33 tours dans la collection?

Il y en a cent-vingt-deux dans la collection Montparnasse. On a d'autres collections. Il y a IML... qui comporte sept numéros plus des titres sur bonde dont il y en a eu au moins une trentaine. Puis il a St Germain-des-Près qui est rendu à dix-neuf disques et en plus tous les sous-éditeurs, c'est-à-dire la musique étrangère dont nous sommes les sous-éditeurs.

Pourriez-vous me dire quels disques ou quel type d'ambiance musicale sont les plus utilisés dans votre collection à l'heure actuelle?

Le synthétiseur!

[éclats de rire : voir p. 34]

Quelles fonctions sont les plus fréquentes de votre musique? Je veux dire, par exemple à la télévision : pour quelle fonction est-ce qu'on emploie la musique de votre catalogue le plus fréquemment? Ce sont les génériques, les jingles, les publicités, ou quoi?

En ce moment c'est dans les émissions pour les jeunes parce qu'ils en créent de plus en plus. Toutes les émissions du mercredi après-midi sont entrecoupées de morceaux d'illustration sonore.¹⁷

Toutes ces bandes dessinées?

Il y en a quelques unes [à illustration sonore]. Mais en ce moment c'est surtout dans tout ce qui se rapporte à l'enfance. Dans le domaine de la télévision c'est plus friand de musique d'illustration sonore; ou alors les actualités.

De temps en temps ça peut être très menaçante. Quand j'étais à Paris il y a deux mois j'ai vu un reportage sur l'Arabie Saoudite. On a créé une atmosphère très menaçante par la musique...

... c'est très courant, oui...

... mais à niveau très bas...

... oui, c'est très, très bas. C'est pour ça que je vous dis que c'est très peu perceptible. Moi, si je ne travaillais pas ici je serais incapable de dire s'il y avait de la musique sur les actualités ou pas.

Tout ça est très étrange pour moi. Je ne suis pas habitué à entendre la musique qui accompagne les reportages politiques ou les actualités, et puisque la recherche neuropsychologique a pu établir que presque tout bruit, même – ou peut-être surtout – très bas entre par les oreilles et va jusqu'au cerveau pour y être enregistré...

... c'est certain qu'on doit l'enregistrer quand-même. C'est comme le fameux exemple d'une seule image de Coca Cola au cinéma. Tout le monde est sorti pour courir après des bouteilles de Coca Cola...

17. Tous les mercredis les écolier français sont libres. C'est pourquoi l'après-midi est chargé d'émissions télévisées pour les enfants.

... oui, mais tandis que l'image subliminale est interdite, il existe toujours les sons subliminaux, une sorte de suggestion subliminale, ça aussi...

... oui, ça vous suggère des sentiments qui normalement vous laisseraient indifférent. Si vous regardez les actualités chaque soir, c'est généralement des choses dramatiques qu'on entend. Peut-être — c'est une supposition seulement — s'il n'y avait pas cette musique dramatique ça serait moins dramatique pour l'oeil. Du fait de lier l'oeil et l'oreille c'est certain que ça doit avoir une influence sur le comportement des gens.

Dans la mesure où vous commandez un nouveau morceau pour le catalogues, quelles sont vos instructions au compositeur?

Là il faut avouer que ce n'est pas mon domaine. Je ne me suis jamais rendu dans une séance d'enregistrement. Je suppose que c'est une coopération entre le compositeur et le directeur commercial, voire artistique.¹⁸ Normalement, beaucoup de compositeurs se présentent chez nous avec des bandes qu'on écoute seul sans le compositeur. La sélection se fait non seulement au point de vue musical, c'est-à-dire formation d'instruments, grande, petite formation etc., non seulement au point de vue du rythme, mais aussi en fonction des disques qu'on a déjà dans l'édition. Si toute la bande est faite sur le jazz, ça ne nous intéressera pas a priori parce qu'on en a déjà. Donc, tout ce qu'il y a de création nouvelle, on l'accepte volontiers. Le premier but, c'est que ça doit être complémentaire à la collection, y apporter quelque chose de nouveau. On est toujours ouvert, mais beaucoup de bandes sont refusées parce qu'elles sont mal enregistrées. Beaucoup sont des plagats de morceaux connus. Si c'est un morceau intéressant, par exemple une musique d'un film qui a très bien marché, on prendra probablement ce morceau-là.

Alors, comme ça vous n'aurez pas besoin de commander grand-chose.

Si, ça nous arrive de temps en temps de commander tel ou tel genre, pour exemple pour les folklores. Il y a beaucoup de disques dans notre catalogue qui sont des reflets d'Allemagne, reflet d'Italie, alors une musique typique qu'on nous demande. C'est de la musique qui reflète une atmosphère bien définie, par exemple; Paris, c'est l'accordéon. On demandera à un tel musicien de faire un disque d'accordéon qui se rapporte à Paris. Ça peut arriver aussi, oui.

18. Le directeur artistique (le D.A.) = artist and reperoire (A&R).

Prenons un autre exemple. S'il vous manque la musique type James Bond / Fender Stratocaster / écho de bande, etc. à la John Barry, est-ce que vous pouvez demander ça directement? C'est une atmosphère très spécifique qui n'est pas de folklore, ni de tourisme musical non plus.

Ça arrive pour la télévision, oui, parce qu'à la télévision il y a un sujet bien déterminé. Pour une grande série de feuilleton, par exemple, il faut qu'il y ait une musique qui marque ce feuilleton. Donc on commande à un musicien de faire une musique qui se rapporte bien à ce feuilleton et qui soit assez percutant pour qu'on la retienne bien.

Puis vous incluriez un tel morceau dans votre catalogue?

C'est très difficile de vous dire puisque la collection était déjà considérable quand je suis arrivée à l'édition.

Quand un compositeur vous présente une bande, est-ce qu'il ou elle est obligé(e) de réaliser l'enregistrement?

Oui.

On ne peut pas donc arriver chez vous, une partition à la main, et demander « ça vous intéresse » ?

Non. En général c'est une band de démonstration qu'ils nous présentent. La partition ne va pas parce que la concurrence est tellement grande, le choix des compositeurs est tellement grand. Il y en a beaucoup qui, pour avoir une satisfaction personnelle d'être chez un éditeur, je crois, produisent eux-mêmes leur bande en payant de leur propre poche l'enregistrement. Puis ils présentent ce produit à l'éditeur. C'est un risque qu'ils prennent.

Mais quand vous commandez du folklore...

... alors, c'est nous qui payons l'enregistrement dans ce cas.

Vous avez votre studio d'enregistrement à vous?

Non, pas du tout : on en loue. Ça marche par séance.

C'est cher à Paris, louer pour une séance d'enregistrement?

Ce n'est pas donné, non! Rien n'est donné en France, même pas la Sécurité Sociale!

4. Boosey & Hawkes (London)

Interview with Terry Moss, of Boosey & Hawkes Recorded Music Library, in his basement office at 295 Regent Street, on Monday 10th March, 1980.¹⁹

I'd like to ask about the history of mood music libraries. How did they first start?

It started soon after the cinema orchestras went, i.e. in the 1930s, and it was mostly used for newsreels, radio plays and so on. During the 1950s the use of music became widespread, especially with television and in all the other media. There was more in radio and in the cinema, especially cinema commercials. Since then television has been the big money-earner if you can break into it. Then there are all the audio-visuals: training films, promotional films for companies and so on.

When you start on a new production, how do you know which composers to contact?

We have a group of composers that we call on constantly. Occasionally they're added to by interesting young people coming along, but this company particularly uses well-trying composers that the past tells us are money-earners. That'll be Cyril Watters, Trevor Duncan and so on.

Am I right in understanding that, when you undertake a new production, your choice of what you include is based on what people have been asking for in the way of things you don't already have in the catalogue?

That's right. We'll make a mental note of it or do more than that when anyone asks for something obscure. We'll make a note of it and the next time we record (and if we've got the money and if it's still required), then we'll do something about it. For instance, you might record a solo bagpipe because somebody wanted it and that might be a disaster because it might never get used again, but you really must have it. So we base our recordings on (a) what's asked for and we don't seem to have and (b) a more up-to-date thing, something that's very popular, like a style. In this case what we do is to go back over the year and ask our-

19. About 45 minutes of this interview had passed before I noticed that the Record button had not been depressed. I therefore phoned Terry Moss in August, 1980, to check up that I had understood the main points of that part of our conversation. As can be seen from the transcript of that conversation over the phone, aims, conditions and financing of the company's recorded music library are similar to those at KPM and Bruton, as indeed are questions of composer briefing, catalogue policy (new recordings, deletion, etc.)

selves what has happened. Our promotion guy goes to studios, advertising agencies and so on, comes back and might say: 'they've asked for a jangle piano'. I don't say we'll record that straight away but we'll think about it when we're planning new productions.

Do you ever delete anything from the catalogue?

We deleted the seventy-eights. We went through them all, evaluating first the music, then the recording sound. Where the music had some sort of message today, and where the studio sound wasn't too wooden and boxed in, we transferred it to 33 and told our users we had done so without trying artificial stereophony or tricks like that. We didn't pretend it was new music.

A term that seems to come up a lot in this business in 'blanket fee'. I've a general idea what it means, but can you explain a bit how it works for you here?

A blanket fee simply means that the MCPS have their tariff. The people using the music log it with the MCPS and, depending on the usage of their film – either to a paying or non-paying audience, overseas, UK only or whatever – they pay the blanket tariff. You can't make negotiations about it. It's the set fee. But if a producer wanted to use, say, the *Elgar Pomp and Circumstance* march he would call us and we would arrange a fee because it's hot property and he would have to pay quite a good fee for the usage. So we only negotiate directly with the user when it comes to things like the Elgar or *Barwick Green*.²⁰ The reason we've done this is because once we discovered some advertisers playing the *Elgar Pomp and Circumstance* march we had in the catalogue. They were only paying a blanket license. We all thought this was nonsense because if an advertising agent wants to use a very well-known piece of music meanly, he'll have to pay for it – that's business. It's tough world we're living in. So we withdrew the Elgar from the catalogue, which means that if anyone wants to use it now they'll have to ring our copyright director who will negotiate a fee. Now, the same has been applied to *Barwick Green*²¹ in the last weeks. We've withdrawn it from the library because not only the yoghurt advertisement but also Heineken Lager have both used *Barwick Green* and both basically got it for peanuts.

20. Signature to the BBC radio series 'The Archers' ('an everyday story of country folk'), first broadcast in the 1950s, and whose title tune, *Barwick Green*, is still the same in 2000!

21. See footnote 20, p. 41.

So it's a simple matter of supply and demand?

Exactly. To apply for a blanket fee, you have to fill in where your film or whatever is going to be shown, if it's a non-paying or paying audience, if you're asking for a worldwide release, or if it's just going to be shown within one country. All these things govern the final cost of the music. I'm sure radio and TV producers think the cost is too high, but in fact it's very cheap for what they're getting.

How do the sort of blanket fees you're talking about stand in comparison to a piece of commercial music on the one hand or to a piece of classical music on the other?

If you want to use a commercial recording of a Tchaikovsky symphony you've got to get all kinds of permission from the record company. If you want to use a commercial record by, say, Abba, then you're in trouble because both the record company and Abba themselves will want a large slice of the cake. However, if you want something that *sounds* like Abba on a library record (that is *if* it exists in a library — it doesn't exist in ours, so perhaps Abba is a bad example)... Anyhow, if you wanted a disco sound you'd be very unwise to go to the *Saturday Night Fever* people because of the cost of it. If you went to a library (and I'm sure every library has at least one disco record in it these days), then you'd pay much less and the aggro would be much less. You just apply to the necessary organisation or, in the case of the Valentino library, you deal straight with them and things are much easier. If you go into the commercial world it's extremely complicated. Very few people do it.

Do Coca Cola work like that? I mean, they have their advertising jingle competitions...

That's right. But on the other hand I happen to know that Coca Cola do a lot of original material. There's a young American who lives and works in Madrid. They commission him to do a lot of their music which he records in Madrid for them. Then they take it around the world and just cut off the language bit and add whichever language they speak in the country where the company is.

I get the impression that practically all your material is specially commissioned. This seems to be quite different from, say, the Italian CAM library which contains lots of recordings from existing feature films, things from the late 1960s by Morricone, for example. Do you do this at all?

Not at all. I don't know about the Italian company, but as far as the British companies are concerned — and I would say this on all their behalf

– 99% of music in British music background libraries is original commissioned music. Of course, there are areas that exist in other libraries that don't exist in ours. For example, we don't have a classical section because arrangements of Tchaikovsky and Beethoven earn less and I don't want to get into that area. I don't want an arrangement of a Tchaikovsky symphony in the library. It's not a personal thing, it's just that I'm restricted on money. I have a budget and I have to think 'now, how can I best spend that money?' Am I going to get Cyril Watters in to arrange the Tchaikovsky B flat minor piano concerto? No. Tchaikovsky/Watters? Can you imagine it? No! I suspect its usage must be limited...

Certainly in this company our works are 100% commissioned. I wouldn't do it in any other way. It also gives you the advantage of having 100% ownership and there's no question of having to share with anyone. Now, the Italian company you mentioned intrigues me because somewhere along the line they have to start sharing their earnings with someone, because if you took the theme from *Mondo Cane* and put it into a library, royalty earnings from it would have to be shared by us, the arrangers and the original publisher. It's too complicated... I know something about this because we're being offered an American catalogue at the moment which I'm going to turn down because it's got so many problems. Stuck in the middle of the catalogue we found a small Prokofiev piece which is public domain in the US but copyright everywhere else. Now, how can I say to our New York office 'I'm sending you our library, but don't use the third track on the first side of that record, don't promote it, because it's PD²² in your country but here it is copyright'? For example, the Elgar²³ is non-copyright in America while here it is. I wouldn't want to get into that, I want a quiet life.

Let me give you another example: there's a very fine composer in Holland called Tony Eyk, a brilliant young man. He's recorded with a Dutch background library who keep offering me their product...

...Do you remember the name of the library?...

'Netherlands Voice' or something.... They keep ringing and saying 'are you interested?'. Well, no, because I must have Holland as well. You see, our catalogue goes everywhere in the world and we have an agent in Holland. I can't tell him not to use the numbers we include in our cat-

22. PD = public domain.

23. The *Pomp and Circumstance* march.

alogue just because they come from the Dutch catalogue originally. That's too much of a hassle for him and for us. You see, someone's going to use one of those pieces in Holland somewhere along the line.

Who gets the rap if that happens?

My name's on the catalogue and I'd rather not get involved in that. I always try and play the game, not because I'm sanctimonious but because I'm not clever enough *not* to play the game. If you're going to deal with skulduggery in your life you've got to be very clever otherwise things will go awfully wrong. Moreover, I'm responsible to a very big company, whereas if I worked on my own it would be another thing.

Your disco record's already out. Do you have any other current projects?

Yes, the radio commercial project. We don't have that yet and it's got to be those very short stings. I might say we're having difficulty with it because we've got to get the composer to write those short bits. Then we've got to record it and — worst of all, probably — we have to edit the damn thing. We try to put good scrolls between each piece so the guy sitting in the studio can drop right down on to it. We don't want him²⁴ to have a great mass of record to plough through and he doesn't want to drop the needle right down into the middle of something and spoil a track. So our problem for this year is how to produce a radio broadcast sting record, get it written, record it, edit and press it.

You don't produce things for jingle machines, then?

No. I wish we could get into it, but as you can imagine, it's a pretty closed shop. There's a great deal of money to be earned out of jingles. We're simply not in on it yet. But still, I'm quite optimistic and there's a lot of chance in the world of music. I mean, *Barwick Green* was sheer chance; it so happened that the producer liked it, it took off and happened to suit the programme. I have a friend at Southern Television: they were doing a cookery programme and needed music. The first thing the producer saw in the catalogue (not our catalogue — so I can talk about it) was a title called *A Piece of Cake* and they took that as their signature for a cooking programme. Now that piece had nothing to do with cooking and it was just luck that particular catalogue had a title called *A Piece of Cake*.

24. According to the use of this pronoun, UK studio engineers must have been mainly men in 1980.

It seems that titling the pieces can be important. Who does that part of the work here?

We all do. It's a very important thing. When you have four or five people and they're all of reasonable intelligence, you're going to have conflict. We sit down and listen to the final master tape of a number, keep playing it through and throw titles around. For example, on the disco record came out of a conversation we had one morning in this office and Angela²⁵ had the word *ferkin* in her crossword puzzle and I said 'it's a measure of drink'. Well, we went round to record that afternoon and I thought: 'well, why not break the mould?' That's because we're looked upon as rather an established Olde Worlde company. I said 'why not give them some outrageous titles?', although we didn't all agree. They were all printed and I can assure you that the board of directors looked at them and frowned; but I said 'you shouldn't know what they mean'. Well, there are a lot of young guys sitting in dubbing studios who are rather amused by these titles because it rings a bell within them and they think 'Get Boosey & Hawkes suddenly changing their attitude to life'. It's not the sort of thing we always do.

Ideally we all try and work out the titles, but the most difficult part of it all is the classification. I'm never really happy with the final classification. This year we've looked at the catalogue and would like to change it's shape and content.

In what way is title classification such a difficult task?

There's the shape [of the printed catalogue] to begin with. Unless it's actually lying on a producer's desk, he doesn't know what he's looking at. Our name doesn't appear down the spine. As it is now, it's got to be down on someone's desk. The idea is to have the catalogue lying permanently on the producer's or librarian's desk. If she²⁶ is phoned up because there's a spot coming on the news and they want some music, she can immediately go to her classification, which is our description of the music. Let me illustrate this problem with our demonstration cassette:

... 'The catalogue isn't deliberately misleading, of course. It's just that it can't tell the whole story. It's so much more valid, more useful to hear the actual music. And now, at Boosey & Hawkes, you can do just that in comfort and with plenty of help around. We've got a comprehensive library of

25. Angela Pyke, Terry Moss's (the interviewee's) secretary at the time of this interview.

26. According to the use of this pronoun, UK music librarians must have been mainly women in 1980.

recorded music, people who understand your problem, and a superb new listening room in a brand new suite of offices. We're in Regent Street, near Oxford Circus, so it won't take you long to get to us. And, let's face it, time is money. Most of us spend our lives working against the clock. That's why it's good to deal with professionals, which is what we like to think we are: Angela Pyke, Gordon Reid and Terry Moss. If you're looking for the right kind of music at this stage, or if you're just curious to hear what we can offer for the future, come and see us. We'd like to meet and entertain you'.

That promotion cassette did you some good, did it?

A lot of good. I stand listening to it and think 'God! That's terrible!', but I had a man in here last Wednesday who was a radio producer and had started a firm called 'Tip Sheet'. He sends a cassette round to all the commercial radio stations. It's a programme of all the latest hits and the record numbers and he sends it round twice a week. They're buying them from him, though he charges 30 quid a second. So if you're a record producer and you've just made a single and you'd like to get it on the air, this man Bob Adams, who's a South African, makes these programmes twice a week and all the commercial radio stations are buying them from him. I said to him 'that's a great idea, Bob', and he said 'do you know where I got the idea from?' I said 'no'. He said 'from your promotion cassette'. Well, I don't think our cassette is very good, but I know from experience that it brought us in a lot of interest.

There's a specific question I'd like to ask you here at Boosey & Hawkes and that is: why you have lumped so much under the Drama heading in your catalogue? I mean, whereas other catalogues split up what you have under your Drama into things like Thriller, Western, etc., you have all these things under one heading. Why is that?

We were talking about that in relation to the shape of the catalogue here at Boosey & Hawkes this year. The trouble is that the catalogue costs a bomb as you can well imagine. If we do what you suggest, we're going to have even more classification. You'll have a Sinister area, a Tense area and so on. I admit, it's totally unsatisfactory as one area in our catalogue and I quite honestly don't know the answer to the problem. Sometimes I ask myself 'shall we do away with classification altogether?', but then we find after a little bit of market research that the classification is the part of the catalogue which people use most. Then I have to say to users 'don't believe our classification too much, please', because if they do, we might lose a usage. Now if you go, let's say, to the Drama section of the catalogue, I know it's unsatisfactory and not

precise enough because the producer might look through the list and think: 'Drama, no, that's not exactly what I want'. On the other hand he might be able to find the very thing he's looking for, which might not have been the case had we split the Drama category into smaller parts.

Let me give you an example: we were very fortunate having good relations with the company that had the franchise on the *Round the World Yacht Race* last year. The year before they'd had about sixty cameras from different companies following the race and it almost caused nasty accidents, so this year they gave the filming franchise to one company to avoid all that. This company came to us for the music and immediately you see sails round Cape Horn, blue skies and storm, don't you? So what we thought we'd have to do was to avoid sea music, and we found music for *Round the World Yacht Race* that didn't appear in our Sea section. We found it in areas like Pastoral and Drama. So in that way you can say that the classification is unsatisfactory.

But surely imaginative producers will look under the 'wrong' heading anyhow?

The thing is they don't have the time. It's my experience that 90% of all producers think of music at the very last minute. They're always late with the music unless they're big enough to have a music advisor. If it's a guy who has to think of the script, the shooting, the locations — as most of them have —, he invariably thinks of the music last of all. Steve, our promotion man, often walks into a studio and they say: 'Steve, thank goodness you're here: you can help us with this take'. And if he's not walking into the studio, someone else [from another music library] is walking in. To be honest with you, to alter the catalogue, its shape and so on, I've had a quote of £6000 and I really can't afford that. I'm going to go to the board of directors and ask them for that money, but I know I'll be thrown out. Still I'd like very much to do something about our catalogue. We've looked at every catalogue we can lay our hands on — English, French and German — and I don't think any of them have solved the problem totally satisfactorily and I don't think it ever will be.

The Selected Sounds people in Hamburg have the cross-check guide at the start of their catalogue. It's all very neat and efficient, but sometimes the moods described by those category headings don't fit the music. You look something up in the cross-index guide which purports to be pastoral, let's say, but some of the pieces referred to just don't fit the bill.

The tragic thing is that those pieces you're thinking of might fit the bill for the guy that wrote them or for the people doing the classification. It's the same thing here. We'll all three of us hear the same piece of music under the some conditions and when we compare notes we find we've all thought of different things when listening to it. So the bloke that set up the catalogue you're talking about might well have seen it in the way he describes, whereas as you come to it fresh and think of something entirely different. It's a very personal business.

Of course, I agree there are endless possibilities of personal interpretation. Still, having listened through a number of background music libraries and having noted general musical traits together with classifications, let's say in the Pastoral sections of the various libraries, you find that there do exist standard pastoral elements in the music classified as Pastoral in all catalogues.

OK, there's something that's patently pastoral, but just occasionally... There's a flute solo and my mind starts going off on the *flûte enchantée* bit and I get all grand thinking of Poulenc, Satie, etc., and I have to tell myself to get away from that because the guy you're dealing with here isn't going to know about all that other music. So far as complicated catalogues are concerned, my experience has been, at least from television stations here, that they just aren't interested. They just don't want to explore a catalogue. The guy or the girl at the desk at the television hears the phone ring and she wants quick access to the music— she wants to get back to her boyfriend or whatever on the phone, and this is understandable. She wants to give the man on the other end of the phone three seconds of suitable music as quick as she can.

There's a big television series coming up now which starts in April: seventeen programmes about the English garden. It's ITV, they've spent a fortune on it and they have John Gielgud doing voice-over. It's going to be the history of the English garden from Capability Brown to 'my little garden at home'. They come here for the music, not for the signature tune, but for the rest of it. Now we immediately started thinking of pastoral and flowery music for close-ups of rosebuds and so on. It's not what the man wanted. I only hope his pictures and music marry. He wanted Stravinsky-like sounds, and if he speeds up the frames, he might get the right effect. He took the records from here and I just hope it works.

Do you have any sort of follow-up research on what music from the library has been used where?

No, the only sort of follow-up process we have here is when we get an inquiry or when a record goes out. We then follow that up to find out if they liked it or if it was any value to them. It's no depth study at all. We just say 'Did you find any use for that?', 'What was wrong with it?'. Perhaps they say 'we were looking for more brass' or something like that. Invariably I find a great many people who don't know what they want. I'm not trying to knock users, but it seems they want a noise without knowing which noise. We get people in here who spend hours with us...

...You mean they don't have words to specify what music they're looking for?

Yes, exactly, and there we're back to the classification problem again. The guy's got a film in his head. He's worked on it for, say, three months and the whole thing's in his mind. Now he needs some music to give it an extra lift. Where do you start? If you're doing a film about brass bands it's easy, but if it's about racing cars or rosebuds it's more difficult.

I suppose it depends on which angle you want to put on the film.

Exactly. Let's say you've got a love scene. Well, you could use some great background score from a talkie. I wouldn't lean that way myself but someone else might. The music makes different sorts of love. Let me give you another example. I saw a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on television where they got the music absolutely right. You see, they didn't go all arty-crafty with Baroque instruments or super-modern either. They just used a small group of instruments and got the mood precisely.

Now, the Royal Shakespeare Company have just finished a run of a series of plays called *The Greeks*. They had a Greek do the music and they used three musicians with instruments like recorders, the odd Greek instrument, chime bells. There were no wasted notes and it was absolutely beautiful. You went in at ten o'clock in the morning and came out at midnight. It was Euripedes, Aeschylus and Sophocles all in one. They've made a tape of all the music which I've bought. It's beautiful: very nostalgic and a very, very high flute on one occasion.

How did you and the other people working here end up in this line of business?

Angela came from one of the great secretarial schools and she is our backbone. She has a phenomenal memory and knows the catalogue from memory without having to look at it, because she has to type the thing. I've been in music publishing in various ways ever since I left

school and while I was in the States the man doing my present job died and I was asked to take over. I knew nothing about it but said I'd love to give it a try. I jumped in at the deep end and it was sheer hell for about two years. Steve, our promotion man, was in advertising. I found that my grey hairs restricted my entry into certain areas. You see, there are a lot of young guys, and girls too, around in the music business and you have to be realistic. There are areas where I would be treated with respect and dignity and that's not always what is required, so I needed a guy who was 'with it', 'hip', or whatever today's expression is, someone who could go and meet young people on his level and go to the sort of places like clubs that young people go to today without feeling a million years old like I would. So in Steve Hansen we have someone who was in advertising, was a musician — he played the oboe — and who knew nothing about background music. I said: 'We need someone to go round and talk about our catalogue, who isn't afraid to pick up a phone when a new librarian arrives somewhere. Sometimes a librarian who retires will phone me and say: 'The new librarian who starts here next week is called Alice Bloggs'. Steve goes down and meets Alice Bloggs, and invariably they're the same age group, which is very important for contact. I see people of my own age. For example, we have an associate company of pop music. The man that runs it is my age and it simply doesn't work in my opinion because the young people's reaction to him is quite different towards a much younger man. OK, the buck stops at my desk. For instance, Steve wants to do something and I have to ask him 'well, what do you think?' 'Have you evaluated the situation?' If he has and it's OK, I'll put my initial to it. But this guy running the pop section, it's all him: he goes to the clubs, he goes to the groups and I'm afraid it just doesn't work.

Of course it shouldn't be that way, but that's the way the scene is. You have to have your beads and your shirt open down to the navel, that's just the way it is. I don't like it of course, and if people ask me if I do, I say it's not a question of what I like. I'd rather be working at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, planning their next year's season — that's my thing, that's what I'd like to be doing, but that's not what I'm doing. So what am I going to do? Fight the world?

I see what you mean. As for as I'm concerned, I'd rather be at home writing choral stuff, symphonies and so on, but they'd never get performed, so I suppose I'm being realistic in my own way too. There are a lot of useful outlets which are looked down on and which composers could use a lot more. You can

do decent rock material, decent material for television, film, radio and so on. I think a lot of composers and musicians still have the old type of artistic illusion left inside them. Instead of looking at Purcell the way he was, that is the bloke who wrote drinking rounds just as well as the great anthems and operas, they can only see him as an artist with a capital A.

Yes, but his world and the world today are different.

That's true, but all we ever get to hear from music history are the 'greats', not the music of the people, not the drinking songs, lullabies, dances, the dances and so on.

I have it in the back of my mind that I'd like to carry out an investigation into the composers that lived during the Mozart and Beethoven period that we never hear now, that we don't know. There are lots of them and they couldn't all have been bad. I guess they were just overwhelmed by the total geniuses. Let me go and get you that disco record...

Thank you. I'll switch off the recorder...

National Film School interviews

5. Sound engineer, National Film School

This interview, also conducted in March 1980, was held in a studio at the National Film School (Beaconsfield, UK). The sound engineer (SE) wished to remain anonymous and, at the time, denied permission to publish this conversation because of contractual obligations. Since the interviewee has long since retired and is no longer contractually bound to the National Film School, I feel it is now (2007) appropriate to make the contents of this highly illuminating conversation available to an online readership. His anonymity is nevertheless retained.

As I entered the studio, SE was in the process of dubbing a soundtrack on to some location shots. On screen was a medium long shot of an attractive, dark-haired woman in her early thirties standing in the middle of a large expanse of well-cut grass in a park. The scene was similar to the famous park scene in Antonioni's *Blow Up*. From time to time the woman looked at her watch, apparently expecting to meet someone else at a given time. This shot was intercut with close-range shots of a distinguished looking older man hiding behind a bush on the perimeter of the lawn where the woman was waiting. He seemed to be the person with whom the rendezvous had been arranged but was clearly prevented from joining her by the appearance of [1] a couple jogging along a nearby gravel path and [2] two giggling children emerging from the shrubbery on the other side of the lawn. These disturbances obviously caused the elderly gentleman some embarrassment and prevented him from leaving his hiding place.

When the sound, recorded on a portable stereo Nagra, was synchronised to picture, the 'objective' audio recording seemed wrong, especially in connection with the man's nervous reactions to the joggers and to the giggling children. SE went to work to make the sound recording fit the film's narrative more convincingly. Without speaking, SE adjusted faders and potentiometers. In just a few minutes he had made the scene much more believable.

What did you just change to make the original 'objective' sound from the Nagra fit so much better?

I don't know. I just twiddle knobs without thinking too much. Let me think...

OK. I left the twittering birds and general ambient sounds at quite a high level but I turned up the volume of the joggers' feet [on the gravel] and [of] the giggling kids to a much higher level than on the 'real' recording. That made it sound a bit better but those sounds came too late. So I made the gravel crunching much louder at the start of that particular shot. Then I passed it through a compressor and faded it out before the joggers were out of the picture.

SE went on to explain that a similar treatment had been applied to the giggling children emerging from the shrubbery. Moreover, the two interruptive events which moved across the screen in mid long shot, the first from left to right and the second in the opposite direction, had been recorded in stereo and were panned accordingly. SE explained that he had also relocated these sounds to a dead centre mono position which corresponded to the intercut close-ups of the older man crouching behind a bush. All these measures, i.e. earlier fade-in, earlier fade-out, higher volume, compressor, mono effect, made the man's and the woman's reactions far more dramatic and credible, reacting nervously, as they did, in the presence of the two interruptions. These processes of sound editing 'subjectivised' the original 'objective' recording. They were processes reflecting the natural selective processes of the two characters' hearing in the situation portrayed on screen and presenting the sounds in question to the audience from their perspective, not through the indiscriminate membrane of a stereo microphone.

During the course of our conversation after this episode in the studio, I asked SE what he considered to be the most important points to remember about sound in the cinema. He mentioned two main categories: the 'aesthetic' and the 'mechanical' which he considered inseparable in many instances. Taking the 'mechanical' part first, he mentioned the following skills as important: how to operate a Nagra, choice of microphone according to the situation, how to record the right thing 'which isn't necessarily the obvious thing, since it all depends on the script'.

You should always log your takes when you're on location. When you get back to the studio you should be able to transfer it all on to 16 or 35 mm film. You should understand the process of track laying and the mechanics of mixing, not to mention how to prepare your film for music recording and post sync. On the 'aesthetic' side, there is the problem of understanding what sound actually does in a film. Obviously we're dealing with something quite different to the original use of sound in films when it just replaced title cards. A lot of people haven't in their

thinking taken sound much further than that: the sound just comes in, says something and goes away. Initially, the whole mood of the silent film was created by the movement of the actors, the way it was photographed, the backing and the accompanying music. What you have to realise these days is that the image becomes a totally different thing when it's accompanied by different sounds.

There's a very crude exercise that I've shot myself whereby the same scene, which in fact is an isolated piece of ground with a lake in front of it, is run as the same piece of action in a loop with ten or fifteen different soundtracks. People who are fairly inexperienced find it difficult to believe that it's the same shot they're seeing round and round because the sound draws your eyes to different parts of the shot: it seems darker and lighter, like a different time of day, it seems like a different world. Although this [the lake scene] was shot... [in the English countryside]..., one of the [sound] tracks is of distant natives coming through the jungle and you get a feel of the shot being very far away. That is a very important aspect of sound. It obviously goes right back to the original script when making a film, when you have to ask yourself whether you really want to say all those words or whether you can convey it more directly through sound.

And this sound only, not music?

Yes, I'm talking about sound at this stage, about sound and all the background atmoses.²⁷ It's a question of thinking in these terms and of planning right at the script stage of a film because most people think initially in terms of literature. But you've got to get out of the verbal thing and go through the question of what film is really all about, whatever that may be: I don't have any answers myself! What you must do is actually look at the screen during the process of a sound mix and realise how the image looks totally different. For example, the opening to the film you've just seen is the same man in bed. The background consists of atmoses on seven or eight different tracks, all outside the room where he is seen and which [the background sound] actually separates him from the outside world. This was our intention: you've got very distant traffic and birds, etc. while inside the room you only have one sound element which is just the clock ticking – just a very small bedside clock. After this he moves, at which point the film changes general direction. It's quite a lonely feeling. So, ignoring music at this stage,

27. *Atmos*: short for 'atmosphere', i.e. background or ambient sound.

what one's trying to do is create a feeling in the mind of the audience when they're watching the film.

Let me wax into purely theoretical areas. Look at the way the human being perceives the two senses that are available on film, i.e. sight and sound. Sight has always been, I believe, a far more analytical sense input into our brain. In other words, if you start off with the theory that we are deaf, blind and dumb inside our skulls, we're sitting there in the darkness of a cinema but we've got little lines going to the outside world through which we receive information. Now, the visual information has always needed to be of an analytical kind, partially because it is framed – and I'm not talking about picture frames – by the shape of our heads. We've always got something at the top, at the bottom and at the two sides. OK, this is man several hundreds of thousands of years ago, but it's built in. Now, the way our brain, in the seclusion of our skull, hears sound is different: we can't very easily, without actually putting something in our ears, control what we hear as we can with our eyes and, again, taking you back on this theorising trip, if we hadn't had our hearing we wouldn't have survived.

Take your average caveman. He's had a hard day, he goes back to his cave and he lies down in order to rejuvenate himself. He has to go to sleep and this means he's got to switch his senses off. He switches off his eyes, his seeing. The sense of smell works quite poorly when you're asleep: it doesn't really come across and the cave would have to be on fire quite badly before his sense of smell told him what was happening. He's not eating or drinking, so he's not tasting and the body's mechanism automatically reduces the signals he gets from his skin as he lies down on the cave floor. Initially he feels the hardness of the floor but gradually those senses iris down while the ears are irised up. So he's lying there with most of his senses switched off but he has to protect himself. He hears the crack of a tiny twig at the entrance to his cave and – this is the interesting bit – he is automatically, without any type of intelligent control, thrown up on to his feet; his eyes peer out into the darkness, his muscles are flexed, adrenaline flows through his bloodstream and he's there ready either to run towards or away from whatever it was that cracked that twig.

Now, up to that point he's not reacting at a conscious level. All right, he looks down and sees it's only a rabbit, so he can analyse his worry out of existence and say 'it's all right: it was only a rabbit; I'm going back to sleep'. But up to the point when his eyes have analysed the source of

the sound he was out of control. The tiny sound of a twig breaking threw his body into an emergency situation and I think this is the most important quality of sound in film. It's the ability of sound to get under people's analytical protective sense of seeing.

Another crude example is the monster movie. You see fog and swirling wind and you hear big heavy breathing and great big thumping feet coming through the mist. If that's well done, the audience will get to the verge of releasing adrenaline. They'll certainly tense up and you can prove this with galvanic skin measurement. Once they see the monster it's the analytical part of their brain with questions like 'is it real?', 'is it made of plastic?'. So, what we're trying to do with the soundtrack is to work with people's subconscious brains. You're dealing with the bit they can't analyse out of existence, and you're thereby controlling them. Now this doesn't mean that the soundtrack is more important than the pictures: it isn't. What it does, though, is to give the filmmaker an opportunity of creating the mood in which the audience views the visual information.

One must bear in mind the subconscious brain all the time and a lot of work has been done recently by such researchers as Professor Dixon at London University whose work on subliminal perception is very interesting. It has been proved over and over again that you can go to some 15 dB below the level at which you're conscious of receiving sound information and still be responsive to it. This has been done with open brain surgery using probes. You can take it down to the point 'is the sound there? No, it's not there; I can't hear it going on and off'. You can go down another 15 dB, to almost a quarter of the previous level and still get a very positive response in the brain. What this indicates is that the brain is monitoring more or less everything, albeit at the subconscious level. If anything strange happens it presses a bell on the conscious brain and says, for example, 'for Christ's sake, run! There's a truck coming towards you!'. But that truck you could hear at a subconscious level while it was still three miles away.

On French TV they sometimes put music behind news reports. They say it's to keep people's interest and involvement in news programming up to a maximum. The level they play it at is extremely low and you won't hear it unless you're an incorrigible music track freak like myself. The music's at a level that wouldn't register on the decibel meter on this recorder but it can tell you how to feel about what you're seeing, what sort of opinion you should form about what's on the screen. Do you mean this sort of subliminal suggestion too when

you're talking about sound?

As you know, in this country subliminal advertising is banned by law.

You mean the one-frame cut-in approach?

Yes, but I don't think they've yet hooked on to the subliminal sound work. As you've probably heard, they did some tests in a chain of supermarkets in the &US where they played a pre-recorded cassette at a level which was well below the general ambiance. The cassette was saying 'don't steal, it's against your better self to steal, it doesn't pay to steal, it's better not to steal', etc. Anyway, the level of theft dropped dramatically and I don't mean 'did it make any difference?'. I mean it really did drop dramatically.

It's obviously more efficient at that level.

You bet. If you bring it up into the conscious brain you start analysing it and perhaps you'll say 'no, I *want* to steal anyhow!'

The next part of the conversation contained several passages which might have led to identification of the sound engineer. This section was excluded from the original transcript. Unfortunately, the sound recording of this conversation no longer exists and this missing section is forever lost.

Coming over to music now, it seems to me to fall into two categories. There's 'up front music' where you actually have music visible on the screen, but then there's the other type of music of which the audience isn't aware. True, you've got the opening titles which are somewhere between the two. The opening titles are telling the audience, albeit again at a — sorry to use the word again — subconscious level, that it's going to be a happy film, a miserable film, a threatening film, etc. When I say 'at a subconscious level' this time, I don't mean by virtue of the amplitude of the sound; I'm talking about the way the message is injected into the music. Music is music and it's going four beats to the bar or whatever, but within that, by using major or minor chords or diminished sevenths, etc., you can actually say something which goes way beyond anyone's requirements for a knowledge of music.

Let me give you a 'Kojak thesis' because it's all about what you just said.²⁸

(Viewing book) I find this a bit frightening because I'm not basically an intellectual person. I don't classify myself as an academic. What I'm trying to do is to accept my emotions an, in the process of mixing,

28. Tagg (1979).

whether it be music into a film or sound effects, I'm sitting there looking at the picture and sensing how I'm being moved emotionally by it. Then I'm responding to that, which requires quite a leap of confidence in oneself to actually to be able to listen to those small voices in the pit of your stomach and say 'yes, that's working', 'that's too much', 'that's not enough', 'that's the right sort of balance'.

But that kind of internal dialogue is ever so important for any musician or for anyone working creatively in this sort of field, isn't it?

Yes. You're not doing this sort of thing [sound editing, mixing, etc.] any more consciously than any good lead guitarist, for example. If you look at him, his eyes can be glazed, he's away, he's actually doing it. The same thing applies to a large extent in mixing, although you do have to a great extent a lot of mechanical constraints. This means you have to deflect your mind into the mechanics of where the sound is when it starts, where it should finish, which is a sort of internal thermometer of whether what you're doing is working or not.

But there is a link between your 'internal thermometer' and your finger and thumb turning that particular knob while mixing, isn't there?

Yes. Once you've got it in your hand, it's happening. Then you forget about the mechanics of it.

The rest of the interview had to be excluded since it contained numerous references which could have led to identification of the interviewee.

6. Composer, National Film School

The film composer (FC) I interviewed in 1980 has since become quite well known. He said he'd had early ambitions to be a film composer and explained that, after traditional practical musical training with specialist studies in composition, he worked choosing music for radio and television. Thereafter he had pursued postgraduate studies in film music (among other specialities). He had in 1980 been employed for several years by the National Film School. As with the sound engineer, I promised to preserve the interviewee's anonymity.

What are you currently working on?

I'm working on two commercial films at the moment. For [one of them] I was given the script right at the outset.

Is that usual?

No, it isn't. You see, I'm actually trying to work on it now. Admittedly, we do have things to record like the dance sequences that have to be done in order to shoot to picture, but that isn't why [the director] wanted the production right at the outset. I have to go to x on location tomorrow and play some stuff for him.

What kind of brief has the director given you?

It's very strange. As I was saying earlier, the difficulty of the composer in trying to communicate with a director is... I mean there are two art forms involved here and then there is a third. On the one hand there's film and on the other there's music and in the middle there's film music which I consider to be an art form and which absolutely fascinates me. So the composer either works with a young director who doesn't understand anything about music and is scared at the mention of a treble clef or a crotchet – that's about as near as he'll get to music – but he knows what he wants in his mind. He knows the sort of thing he wants in his film but he can't communicate it to a composer whose style in music he knows and likes, or he takes a chance on the unknown.

The main trouble for the composer is to try and assess the situation and to determine whether the director will treat him as a creative artist in the same way as the cameraman or the designer, or not. Am I allowed, as a composer, to go off with the script and come back with an independent suggestion in music as to what I think the film requires?

The other thing is that if the director has a very strong idea of what he wants, he's always going to be let down at the other end because, I think, unless he's able to play the piano himself showing a rough guide

of what he wants, there's no way in which you're really going to be able to pinpoint the actual type of music he requires. Mind you, this sort of thing has happened to me in the past. I was working together with [director x]. He put together a short and I did the music for that. He had a curious method of working because he would present me with snippets of music, you know – various people playing various moods –, and say 'look, this is the sort of feel I want'. It was either the kind of atmosphere or the sort of instrumentation he wanted and he would throw these ideas at me.

How did you find that kind of suggestion?

I found it fine once I'd got the gist of what he was getting at. This was quite clear because he also presented me with pictures. This is another method which I find fascinating. He presented me with the designs and I was able to see exactly what costumes would be used in shooting the film. That was a very good way of working but there comes a point when you have to say 'Fine! Now I have the gist of what you're trying to do. I still have to go away and do my thing in the confines of that kind of briefing.

The other type of brief... is really where... [the director] hires people who he puts an enormous amount of faith and trust in. I'm really scared sometimes by [this way of working] because [a director like that] has probably worked together with many other members of the crew on [earlier films]. The main brief from [this second type of director] has been 'don't think of period' (if it's a historical film), which doesn't mean I shouldn't introduce things like this [plays parallel fifths] sort of medieval thing into the score.

This space symbolises exclusion of information leading to possible identification of the interviewee.

Fifths like that are strange. There are Indian fifths (both North American and South Asian), Egyptian Pharaoh-type fifths, medieval fifths...

...and cowboy fifths and Irish fifths too. What I like to do is to get my ideas by sitting in the cutting room. That's where I get my orchestration ideas. Perhaps my method unlike that of some other composers who come in for a breakdown of footage or for a second-by-second breakdown of the film. I want to sit in the cutting room and hear the director saying 'I want that take', 'let's cut it there', 'let's have a dissolve there' and so on. I like to be in on that creative process. At the same time – and this has happened in practically every film I've worked on – the

others feel, for example, that a particular cut should out at a certain point while I feel the take should go on for a longer time, I have to say sometimes 'no, give me as much of that take as you can because I need to let the musical phrase I have there die out in order to enter into the next scene.'

Is that sort of request on your part generally accepted by the editor or director?

Oh, yes, usually and totally. Maybe it's the way I ask for it! I've done it on several films and in every case I've been given what I needed frame-wise, whether it be to hold a shot, to hold a close-up, to make a dissolve run longer, even as far as putting in extra bits of action which may be totally irrelevant if you only look at the scene but which become better because the music has been built up to such an extent that the best way to resolve the scene is to make it musically run a bit longer. I've even asked on the other hand for scenes to be shortened and for severe cuts to be made and they've usually been quite good about this too.

Wouldn't you say that was a pretty unusual way of working?

Yes, definitely. The other method I employ and which I will be using on [the film I'm working on now] is... to lay various tracks on a four-track machine and to give them an advance idea of what I'm going to record the week after in the studio with the musicians. Every scene and sequence requiring music I'll do in exactly the same way with the director. We'll spend a day in the studio, I'll write something, return the following day when the director will listen to what I've done and make his comments. Then I'll either change it about or alter it in the way required.

When you do this kind of provisional score after having been in the cutting room with them and you want to present them with your musical ideas in this sort of rough version, how do you get over the difficulty you mentioned earlier of putting across the whole idea of the music if it's just played on the piano, or on two or three instruments, when the finished version may be scored for full symphony orchestra?

The transition from piano to fully recorded is one of the aces I like to keep to myself because I think it's essential for composers to have their flexibility, to be able to work like a designer who will show the director his designs and where the director might say 'that's far too florid, let's have something plainer' and where the designer then goes away and redoes it. The director has that kin of facility with the composer too, at least with me! I like that way of working because, when it comes to the

crunch, it's *your* ideas or your reworking of the idea which is passed, which is what the director wants. What you're doing is presenting [the director] with an orchestration he might in fact hate, although I've never run into this problem myself yet, touch wood! You see, usually the director what's coming because he's heard you play it on the piano before; but whether he's able to make the transition from piano to final orchestration inside his head is really something else. I've never worked with a director who really could imagine my score inside his head.

At this point FC tells what can happen when he shows a film score to someone who can read music. 'Are you sure you want to put guitar harmonics against a whole string section?' might be the sort of objection a notationally literate person might make. FC's reply in such a case would be 'it's OK: the guitar's closely miked'. The point is that it is difficult, even for someone who reads music, to imagine what the final music track will sound like from merely reading the full score.

It's even more difficult for the director who can't read the music. He thinks he knows what's coming out of the recording studio but he doesn't really because hopefully the sounds will be much more varied, fuller and richer than what he had imagined from the piano stage. This is just one insurmountable problem I've not found a solution to.

Don't you think a director ought to be able to understand a little better how a particular piece played on the piano will be finally realised, orchestrally or electronically?

I think the general attitude... in the industry... is where people say 'oh, it's all right: we'll bring in the composer and he'll score the film and everything will be OK. Music's the least of our problems'. In one way this is true because musicians are so bloody professional! A composer is brought in to do a film, he doesn't want to lose it, he wants that sort of work again. Of course he's going to write twenty-four hours a day, eight days a week and he's going to sit there and say 'isn't the film industry hell!? Is *this* the life of a film composer? It's just accepted that he works like hell for a short period of time. He gets to the studio to conduct his session or, if he's very lucky, he gets someone else to conduct it and the score is produced. Well, the composer is relied on, the musicians are relied on and the standard of studio technique and session musicians is such that they do it superbly and efficiently — just one, two, three or four takes and that's it. It's a very high standard of performance. Film making is such a hassle that if you can minimise the worry

at all, then you do. So they wait until four weeks before the dub and then bring in the composer, having found out that scene after scene needs music, that others don't make sense and that's a hassle. It's a rush and it's a nightmare. That's the usual situation for the composer in film making... I've never been in a position where I can say to a director 'let's get some common terminology under our belts' because it just doesn't seem to come off. If you're talking about an allegro passage or time signatures or keys or whatever, that's OK; you can give him a crash course in extremely elementary musical terminology. You can then have some sort of working vocabulary. On my front I have learnt the working vocabulary of film techniques, of the jargon of the cutting room, of what a medium close shot is and so on. That's expected of me but it's not expected of all composers... I don't think many film composers have studied film either practically or as an art form... What I'm hoping to cover are all three of the aspects I mentioned earlier: film, music and film music. Someone in the driving seat has to have some idea of what the hell is going to happen in the film. Hopefully, I think I'm sensitive enough to know what the director's intentions are, what his feel is towards the film. I find myself to that end spending an inordinate amount of time talking to the director.

...We meet... and usually the film we're on, or other films, are the only subjects we can talk about. Usually it's his film and what he's trying to achieve in a particular scene. Then I can work out for myself whether it's a problem that can be overcome by music or whether it's a cutting problem, an acting problem, or a scripting problem that wasn't foreseen at the outset.

There are all sorts of transitions in a film which fascinate me. There's the transition from script to visuals which is one hell of a jump. It's like the jump from no music to having the right music: that's a big one, too. These are two jumps which the director can envisage to a certain extent but he doesn't really know the outcome in terms of what the music's going to sound like and what the picture's really going to look like. Perhaps he knows he wants that medium close shot and the actor dressed like that, but until you actually see it up there on the screen and know that the action is going to work and that a cut is going to work, there's no way he can fully realise how the thing is going to be.

To what extent, when you're talking to a director, can you talk in terms of stereotypes? I don't mean stereotypes as clichés in a derogatory sense.

To a great extent, if you mean references to other films or styles of com-

position.

Yes I do, plus to other composers, or even to particular pieces of music which both of you know.

That happens quite a lot. But usually I take exception to that because I feel I have a very keen idea of what the role of music should be in films. Music, as you know, can play a hundred and one different parts in a film. It can be contradictory, it can be supportive, etc., etc. I have a very keen idea of the overall object of incidental music to a film; to find the right type of music, the right type of sound that will offset the film to the best possible advantage. You must offset the film with the right type of flavour, the right type of sound. Whether I'm going to work at a conscious or a subliminal level is up to me as a composer according to what I see fit at the time. If there's a scene that's soft, quiet and magical and the music is so low that you can hardly hear it, but it's a particular type of sound that's going to make you see that scene in a different way, then you're creating an atmosphere rather than writing music in the proper sense. So I see the spectrum of the music from effects right across the board to the actual main themes and strident music cues where it's almost like concert music. It's a broad spectrum and I like to work at the other extreme where music comes together with the other elements like design and acting, effects, lighting and everything else to add to the finished product. Perhaps I'm a frustrated film maker who's a musician! Anyhow, the stereotype thing is generally not for me: if they want a Legrand feel they should get Michel Legrand to do the score.

I can definitely understand that. What I really meant to ask was if you could use, say, Legrand as a common term of reference with the director so you could both understand each other better if a certain type of music is being talked about.

Perhaps they'll bring in a snippet of, say, Michel Legrand. but then they usually say they don't exactly want that. They have five or six different things along with them and they say 'it's not Legrand really; it's got that kind of flow but it's more Vivaldi-like' or something like that. So, yes, we do communicate like that sometimes. It's one of our methods.

When shouldn't music be used in a film?

I can't really tell you without being specific and we've been talking very generally. Liz Lutyens says 'write what the film needs'. That's a basic cliché I think is very important. If the film needs that type of

Vivaldi-Legrand feel, then you're going to have to give it that but the synthesis of visuals and music should happen before it comes out of those speakers. It has to happen inside you as a composer. In that way it won't come out like a Vivaldi-Legrand pastiche or whatever.

One of the oubles is that in colleges, academies and so on, not to mention musical circles in general, writing music for films is generally considered a bit of a hack job. There have been no real academic minds applied to the subject. Vaughan Williams said somewhere that film is the most exciting art form of the era and that he still got a morning blush every time he was asked to score a film because it's an art form which someone like Wagner would have freaked out in. On the academic front, film music is still considered to be a quick buck. They think you're dealing with people who are running around in small circles wasting a hell of a lot of money shooting and re-shooting. The image they get of the film industry is that it's chaotic and that people don't really know what they want. They think it's a place you just come in and do a score; then you leave. They look down on it. Although I'm not anti-academic myself I find that sort of attitude towards film music pathetic.

Cultural studies interviews

7. Graham Murdock (Leicester)

Interview with Graham Murdock, Wednesday 5 March 1980, at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester.

In 1980, the main point of interest as far as popular music research is concerned at the Centre in Leicester seemed to be the postgraduate courses offered to teacher trainees (Education Department). This seemed to be where studies of popular culture played the most important part at the university. A large part of the following conversation deals with course, the rest with popular music research in a more direct manner.

At this centre, what are your contacts with the Education Department and the MA course? Your general course in culture I understand as an important sociological ingredient.

The course is split between the Centre and the Education Department and the assessment is 50%. Students have to do an equal amount in both areas. We start with a common term on our side which is split into two lecture courses. One deals with institutions and processes of production in the cultural industries while the other deals with problems of looking at content and understanding responses. That's just an arbitrary division but it's so the lectures don't go on for three hours each. That's the first term. Then they get a general course and pointers towards what the literature consists of.

[During] the second and third terms, all the teaching is in seminar options. Usually we offer seven options and they have to do two. My option is called 'Problems in Cultural Theory' which is basically looking at semiotics and Marxism. There's also an option on communication in the third world. Most of what we teach is Anglo-American but the Semiotics and Marxism course is basically an option on the European tradition. I particularly concentrate on cultural criticism of culture and the arts. I bias it towards mass communication but if they want to do something on the novel they're quite entitled to do so. The other kinds of option we do are Communication and Politics, Further Studies in Production, Problems of Creativity in the Cultural Industries, and Psychological and Clinical Approaches to Understanding Audiences: perception theory and that kind of thing.

They have to do a dissertation as well: it's a compulsory part of the assessment. In fact they have to do four papers and one dissertation, all in the course of twelve months. This means two papers from the education course, two papers from us and a dissertation on a subject of their own choice from the entire range of educational studies and communication studies.

What are these people likely to be doing later on? Are they all going to be secondary school teachers?

It varies. Quite a few are already teachers and are sent here because they want to introduce this kind of area into the school curriculum. The others are mostly recent graduates, most frequently in social science but sometimes in the humanities.

Do you ever get a musician here?

We have had a jazz musician. He did his dissertation on the audience for different kinds of jazz.

Interesting. Does that dissertation exist here?

It should have done but unfortunately the Education Department isn't very efficient at storing dissertations. No, we haven't had any musicians apart from amateurs – you know, some students who play the piano, that's all. Most of them go into some educational discipline or into educational television and that sort of thing. Most of them want to teach cultural studies or some kind of linked discipline. Quite often they teach in polytechnics²⁹ or in educational colleges, one step up from secondary school but not quite university. Almost all of them have got jobs but that may change now because things are getting so severe with this [Mrs Thatcher's] government cuts in public spending.

What do you tell them the first term they're here? What in your options are the most important things for them to know about musical communication and about music and society?

We'd only use music in as far as it was an example of something else. The first term deals with basic processes; so, if there were studies of music which illustrated particular processes, then we'd use those. They would be aware, for example, of Adorno, of the famous debate between Adorno, Lazarsfeld and Riesmann. Our students also have to do a course on methodology, so they would use the Adorno-Lazarsfeld

29. *Polytechnics*: UK institutions of tertiary education, subsequently raised to the status of universities.

thing as a way of looking at basic methodological problems. The basic idea is to jolt them out of their preconceptions. You see, I do the Frankfurt School in the Cultural Theory options, so they would come back to it from a different angle if they followed my option.

Don't you think that the contradictions between Adorno and Eisler would be more efficient in jolting students into thinking about problems of cultural communication than the discussion between Adorno and Lazarsfeld?

The problem is that students would never read another language, so everything has to be in English. Another reason for choosing Riesmann is the question of how much you can infer from any kind of textual analysis. The problem is whether you need to do any sort of audience studies if you do a textual analysis and the relation between the two. That's another problem we would like to introduce them to: what are the problems of textual analysis?

Do the students have this level of conceptualisation?

Some of them are very well read in the social sciences, the humanities and areas outside the two. The real problem is that most of the students don't have much knowledge of the actual cultural objects which these books refer to; so that's one reason why I teach stuff referring to the mass media. I'll look at books on the western or the thriller rather than look at Goldman on Racine. In that way they won't feel so alienated from the subject matter. Take Adorno on 'New Music', for example. A lot of them have never heard any of the music he mentions there, so it's a lot of labour for very little reward. Adorno on jazz is better course material because they know the music better and can thereby formulate criticisms of it. That, plus the translation problem, actually biases what we can't do here quite considerably.

One problem with all this seems to me to be the specificity of musical communication. I admit this is a bit of a hobby horse, but how do you tackle the question of 'reading' a musical text as opposed to 'reading' television, literature, etc.?

We don't really get into that.

Is that marginal for you personally or for the course in general?

No, for neither, but considering the way the course is set up at the moment, that sort of thing would be difficult to accommodate. What we're trying to do the first term is to give them an overview of conceptualising the problems rather than getting to grips with the problems them-

selves. It would then depend on what options they plumped for. In my course they do semiotics and would look at a range of 'texts', including musical and visual texts. They could avoid that altogether, though: it's not compulsory. Most of them do actually choose this option, so it works out reasonably well.

I'm just wondering if there isn't a risk here that studies in conceptualisation can become a bit artificial if the more concrete problems of different types of textual specificity haven't been tackled in some way. I mean: in music, people expect to find parallels between speech and musical communication. Of course there are some, but shouldn't the differences between the two types of communication be made as clear and as tangible as possible?

The more central area in the kind of thing we teach would be the problem of applying linguistic metaphors to visual message. That's more central to the areas we're dealing with – television, for example. We do look at that but we don't actually teach much about music. It would be the kind of thing students would be free to develop in their dissertations.

How long do you think it will be before music can become an accepted part of a course like yours? I'm thinking of music as a cultural form in proportion to its listening time per capita, its economic importance, etc.

The problem is that we can't teach what doesn't exist. Since the course can't be any more than an introduction to the existing corpus of literature – and there is so little literature on this aspect of music –, we have to have a sort of proportional representation system on the basis of what literature is actually available. Compared to stuff on television there is very little on music. That's why music is not particularly prominent on the course, plus the fact that nobody here at the centre is specially interested in the sociology of music. However, if they did a psychology option, quite a lot of the examples they use are on music reception. That way they would get into a discussion of cognitive processes and the role of affectivity in response. They use quite a catholic range of different cultural representations. They'd begin to look at the problem if they took that option.

I suppose that raises the question of whether the amount of available literature on a particular subject should be considered a valid criterion for whether or not that area of study gets included in a course.

I might well apply other criteria for research studies but for a one-year introductory course you can't. You've got to give them a reasonable in-

roduction to what exists, while pointing out the problems and gaps. Research, on the other hand, means researching something which hasn't been researched yet and that's a different kettle of fish. You can't introduce someone to the 'absences' if you haven't introduced them to the 'presences'!

I don't disagree with that! But don't you find that the absence of literature in an area like musical communication motivates research into that area just for the sort of educational purpose you mentioned?

Yes, but there are so many areas which have hardly been touched at all. There are hardly any studies of television drama, for example, compared to the massive amounts that have been done on news and documentary. We haven't really begun yet to theorise fiction and entertainment in the mass media. Within media there's hardly anything written on radio, hardly anything on publishing, although publishing is still the largest single media industry. There's not really a great deal written about film apart from textual analysis, almost nothing dealing with theories of the film audience, for example. I'm afraid music has to queue up among a whole series of very important gaps. The literature which exists is very biased towards the political actuality end of the media – a lot on the representation of political processes, politics and the media, the documentary and news, etc. It's all perfectly reasonable stuff but it has meant tremendous absences. Moreover, there are practically no sociological studies of photography either – an area I'm particularly interested in –, nor of how people understand these popular images: at least I can only think of only one full-length study on this. Now, if you consider how ubiquitous photographs are...

I think that puts my question in fair perspective!

You see, music is just one of many crucial absences. Teaching the sociology of photography is practically impossible. All you can do is raise interesting questions of the nature 'what do we need to know?', 'how do we go about finding out?'. All you can say is 'this is an important question because of its social centrality but actually we don't know anything about it'.³⁰

30. If I were interviewing Graham Murdock today (March 2007), I would have suggested that individual or group research projects could contribute to filling some of these gaps and, at the same time, given the conceptual grounding of his MA students, provide training in research method and independent thinking.

Where do you recruit research students and researchers? What projects have you got planned?

From graduates who would get involved in a project generated by a member of the staff here. We would try and get them a postgraduate research grant. There are so few grants now and it is open competition, so people from outside are also advertised for in *The Times Educational Supplement*, *The Guardian* and *New Society*. We've got grant applications in all the time. At the moment I'm trying to get some money to do a study of the industrial patronage of the arts, i.e. corporate sponsorship of cultural production, what implications the cutbacks in public financing will have for the range and diversity of cultural production. I'm also trying to get a submission with another member of the staff here [Hartman] to do a sociology of popular photography. It's all very unpredictable. Other people here have two or three projects in the pipeline.

Who finances your research at the Centre here?

It all comes from outside. There are three main sources: (1) the charitable foundations; (2) the various government and local government departments or organisations of which the Social Science Research Council is the main channel of money into public research; (3) international bodies. Quite a lot of the work we do now is in the third world, so we'd be involved with quite a few international bodies. There's no embargo on who you ask for money here although I'd personally be unhappy with private sponsorship. It's a 'horses for courses' situation, so you submit a project to the sort of body who you think is most likely to fund it.

What about radio and television, the BBC, for example? Do you do anything for them or is everything they need done by their own research departments?

Most is done by their own research departments, though we've just got a large grant from the Independent Broadcasting Association, which is the government monitoring body for the independent sector, to look at the response to television by ethnic audiences, particularly West Indian and Indian.

What contacts does the Centre have with the film or music industries?

Practically none, at least in the sense that we haven't yet done a major project on film or music. That's another example of our skew in attention... Most of our research has been on the press or broadcasting.

What about advertising?

Not a great deal either, though we've begun to move into that just recently. We've had some preliminary talks with the Advertising Association but, there again, it's an area which hasn't been particularly well represented in our research. We are a pretty decentralised place really. There are strong preferences here among the six salaried members of staff as regards what they'd like to do. It's a trade-off between what people are passionately interested in and what outside bodies are prepared to fund. The reason things are not represented here is primarily because nobody particularly wants to do them. It may sound kind of hap-hazard but we don't have a kind of Stalinist policy whereby next year we'll all be doing advertising or something like that. Research projects get funded for some very strange reasons sometimes: it's like the pools. The main problem is that funding bodies are making more and more stringent demands as to what research can and can't do, which means less flexibility in the research situation. In the old days there was flexibility which I think led to better research. Now you have to have a very tight design before funding bodies will even consider it. You can't really ever predict the actual content of any research project.

Yes, research applications and funding is one big lottery for us [in Sweden] too. I wonder if any of the projects we're involved in at [the musicology department at the University of Göteborg] would interest you. We have some semi-otic studies of popular music, studies of low-church religion and music, also stuff about the relationship between musical idiom and the social origin of listeners to different types of rock, etc. At the moment I'm trying to a run-down on the presentation of key concepts of 'nature' in music. Is any of this of any interest to anyone here?

Well, yes, of course, but apart from the study on the TV serialisation of *Emma* [Lauritzen 1980] you mentioned earlier, what would interest us in the music line at the moment would be anything on the music industry and patterns of consumption.

8. Dick Bradley (Birmingham)

Conversations with Dick Bradley, music researcher at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, held at his lodgings in Handsworth, 4-6 March, 1980.

These conversations started with introductory personalia, politics, the teaching of German in Birmingham secondary schools, etc. After a while the topics veered towards popular music studies, a discussion of Chambers (1979) and a general rejection of borrowing linguistic models en masse to apply to the semiotic analysis of music. I pressed the record button as Bradley finishes his part of the critique.

...Chambers uses linguistic terminology to give an aura of scientificity to his study and uses the term *discourse* loosely. I don't mind *discourse* as you use the term in *Kojak* [Tagg 1979] but myself I use the term *discursive* to describe a particular kind of *discourse*.

Well, where are you at now in your research?

From general theoretical things like Adorno, which I found I couldn't do without last year, I'm now trying to provide an account of the fifties in Britain with particular regard to amateur music making. Why was it that there was this great upsurge of kids making do-it-yourself rock and skiffle when it hadn't happened before? Why that change? I've gone back to that now but with more of a grasp on how I intend to relate the intramusical with the sociological.

I'd like to read that when it comes out.

You'll have to wait. Still, [the CCCS] is kind enough to publish the thesis as a series of papers as they come out. The fifties, that's a difficult area. Starting with a historiographical criticism of all the writers like Gillett, Belz — Cohn I haven't got anything really to say about because it's so journalistic and doesn't make any great claims —, Laing, which is excellent, etc., etc. I'll try and present a sort of standard account of the fifties, a sort of run-down of what all those writers have to say.

What about Herman, Millar and so on?

I'm only concentrating on those that are more strictly histories but I'm mentioning people like Greil Marcus, Shaw, etc. who impinge on it but aren't histories in the same sense/ The question is: what are the elements that bear in all of them? That's what I want to get hold of: this business of teenage affluence, new attitudes to sex and courtship and the coming together of black and white sections of the industry, in fact all the common denominators of historical description. Then I'll try and

criticise that from the point of view of its absences, in particular the absence of the question of gender. None of them really discuss why it's so male, both the rock and roll industry and the amateurism that follows in its wake. None of them really discuss why amateurism should follow rock and skiffle and no other musics on a comparable scale.

What about dixie?

Yes, that's right. Dixie was a middle class and student thing.

What about the absence of other demographic factors in accounting for the rise of rock and roll. I'm thinking of the rise in the proportion of teenagers continuing their education after the compulsory school leaving age.

Right. Longer schooling together with greater affluence is an important point, not forgetting earlier maturation, too.

I agree but I still think the fact that the numbers of kids attending school after the age of sixteen actually doubled between 1948 and 1960 in the USA is a severely underrated factor, simply because of the needs that radical demographic change creates in terms of group identity. I mean, this group of high school students in their upper teens never really existed before.

Yes, and the same tendency can be seen in Britain. First there's the raising of the school leaving age and then the increase in numbers, particularly girls and working class kids, staying on at school until sixteen and then even until eighteen throughout the fifties. It was steadily expanding all the time. Of course, since 1960 or so it's stopped expanding.... The expansion during the fifties has undoubtedly something to do with it. In the USA you have to add the factor of the car. Teenage mobility was a huge factor in itself.

I suppose that this is the [US accent] 'first time in human history' [end US accent] that there is such a large group of people who are neither members of adult society in that they don't have any work nor children in families either really.

Yes, the concept *teenager* was coined then, it's true; but it was coined in an ideological fashion with connotations of wildness, rebellion, youthful exuberance, etc., depending on which side you were. In the USA you can add to this the question of older school kids that of the breakdown of segregation in schools, which was made illegal in the last school in the States in 1955 but had been illegal in most states since the war. That was in theory, not in practice, but it did mean that most schools had to make some change on that count.

Still, I'm trying to get away from the tendency which most authors have, even British, to discuss the USA in some detail and then append a couple of remarks about Britain. From the point of view of what was to happen in subsequent years, surely Britain should be considered as important as the States, particular in regard to what we call the Big Beat Scene in Britain, which leads both through to British R&B and into the Beatles.

What are your theories accounting for this development?

Partly the sort of subculturalist explanations which [the CCCS] has been good at, that is the Teds and subsequent subcultures at a point when they have to leave school and go on the labour market. I'm talking about Paul Willis's work. I don't know if you know that...

No, I only know his thing about music in groups of hippies and motorbike kids in Birmingham.

Oh, that's his weakest work! *Learning to Labour* [1978] is his best. That's an in-depth study of a gang of lads leaving a Midlands comprehensive [school] and going out into the wide world, about their leisure activities and so on. It discusses their beliefs about life in contrast to what happens to them over subsequent years.

...Teatime...

What are your theories about the relationship between skiffle and the development of the Merseybeat thing?

The intramusical relationship is difficult to establish because Merseybeat is really a fusion of other things, not really including skiffle.

But what about the Quarrymen?

OK. The Beatles did play skiffle in their early teens but the band all the big [UK] names tried to copy was of course the Shadows.

But they were influenced by skiffle, weren't they?

Yes, but like Bruce Welch said in his book, the only good thing skiffle did for him was to make him save money to buy a guitar. It's not the musical influence that's so important: it's the boost it gives to amateurism. What I'm interested in is why all this amateurism happens.

The conversation went off at a tangent here, digging deeper into Shadows numbers, thence to the importance of Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran for British R&B, finally to a discussion of Tommy Steele's session men versus the Shadows.

Are you also trying to find out what made British kids in the fifties listen to Holly, Cochran, the Shadows, etc.?

I must say that I do see the key to what's unique about rock in the fact that it elicits the response of playing and trying to do it yourself. Really that has hardly lessened since. Guitar sales shot up in 1955 and they have more or less stayed there ever since.

What would be your intramusical points of study in all of this?

I haven't solved that yet. I've got some hypotheses about what the music articulates as a whole but nothing to bear on why the British kids take up skiffle and rock. One theory I'm working on is the maleness of rock. It's male in a particularly intense way. That I've borrowed from Laing. Dave Laing and Jenny Taylor have invented various categories like *teeny rock* and *cock rock*, the latter meaning Thin Lizzy and artists like that. All these categories are along a scale of maleness, of narcissism and aggression and all the various things that identify with the music. I'm working on applying that idea back into the fifties, particularly as regards Elvis, but as regards others too. It's been done a bit before but not enough. The question is: by what process of coordination do boys identify with a rock singer and girls worship the same rock singer? How come the two coincide in Elvis? You'd expect the wriggling of hips to elicit two different responses from the two sexes, but in one sense they don't really.

Is this due to some change in the male gender role or is it just a new type of statement of standard aspects of traditional male behaviour?

Here the conversation goes off at a tangent to discuss our personal views on gender and its stereotypes. Neither Bradley nor I answer this last question.

Who's your supervisor?

Paul Willis. He actually gave up trying to do anything on the social meaning of pop music and moved to this general stuff about growing up, the change from the kid's world to the adult world and so on.

What sort of theories do you intend to use? What's your conceptualisation basis for dealing with the problems of establishing relationships between the intramusical and the social?

One approach I've taken from John Shepherd where he argues that music can articulate the 'world sense' of its time. His thing about 'time sense' when he describes the change over from plainchant to tonal music is particularly good in its historical context and I'm not sure this ap-

proach can't be applied to pop music too. I was interested in arguing that the rhythmical predominance of, or preoccupation of rock musicians with, the beat – i.e. the fact that the beat is externalised in the form of a drummer – reflects a 'time sense' too. Time is externalised in regular form by the drummer while the singer, the tune, the other musicians, all play against the beat. It's in all Afro-American music.

It's not in country blues.

No. It arrives in blues at the same time as urbanisation.

Exactly. Surely this has as much to do with what you say as it is connected to soundscape changes and to economical and physical factors demanding that the music be louder and more danceable?

Yes, the 'sound of the city'.

Yes. It's like a re-creation of the changing and changed sound environment if you like.

That's right. It's a re-creation, not a reflection. The way in which the music is not quite the same as the non-musical noises you're exposed to. This will tell you a lot about the meaning of the music. My theory is that the externalised drum beats are like clock time and that the subjective aberration of the singer from that clock time is at loggerheads with that time. Moreover, I agree with you very strongly with what you wrote about present-time experience in your thesis and think this can be applied to studies of rock music. It's all a bit speculative at this stage but I think there may be a connection between being enslaved by the clock at school and work, like most ordinary people, and the regular clockwork of rock rhythm.

Do you know Knepler's Geschichte als Weg zum Musikverständnis and his theories about how music helps individuals externalise their own affective relationship to their environment? It's like music as a sort of control over your environment, a bit anthropological, like painting an edible animal on the wall and sticking pins in it before hunting. Then, if you enter a soundscape and a pace of life which is different from the previous one, there's going to be an intonation crisis...

No, I haven't come across that.

None of it's in English to my knowledge, which is a scandal...

Tangential talk about Assafiev's intonation theory, about the various meanings of 'intonation', about Knepler, then into R Murray Schafer's concepts and approaches.

I just think a combination of Knepler and Schafer would fit your theory pretty well.

Yes, it fits in with the development of the blues into industrialisation. During the thirties and forties it wasn't really listened to by whites at all and led a sort of isolated existence. Yet this is the same time that [US rural blacks] moved out of the countryside into the cities. Henry Ford opens up his factory to black labour on the same day as Storyville closes down. The blues firstly splits into a division which, as you say, is partly economically caused and has to do with the provision of dance music too...

...and with the actual acoustic environment in which that music is being played...

...but the division could take various forms. In the sort of blues dance group we're talking about there's the division of labour into its drummer, singer, guitars and so on. Its singer and guitars are all in their own way cutting across or subverting, not in the political sense, the background rhythm. We have to talk about a background rhythm and a foreground realisation of something other than that rhythm going on simultaneously.

The sort of dichotomy or dualism you describe there has been covered by Maróthy [1974], at least as regards the rise of monody and the change over from [contrapuntal] polyphony.

I haven't read that but I have linked up with Andrew Chester's [1970] notions of *intensional* and *extensional*. Chester argues that classical music, from the rise of the sonata form and onwards, has tended to be *extensional*, i.e. it uses a small amount of thematic material to engender a large structure in time and gets interest from passing through different keys and so on. He says this from the point of view of the organisation of time in the work and from the point of view where variation comes in, which keeps up the interest of the listener from one section to the next. On the other hand he says that the blues and all music which tries to put the blues in a dominant position is *intensional*. This means that the basic harmonic structure and structures of duration are more or less all given and not subject to variation. All the various changes take place in the realisation of different patterns *within* the framework of this limit of the structure. The classical example for his argument here is of course the twelve-bar blues but the strophic song, as it became conceptualised in the twentieth century, is equally susceptible to that kind of

intensional variation. Chester doesn't seem to talk about rhythm and time or the fact that the main intensional ingredient of the music is contained in the process whereby the phrasing of each instrument becomes the focus of interest and expression. I try to use his arguments on intensional and extensional on the time aspect I was talking about.

That's really interesting. I think we could all get somewhere with those concepts. Really good.

There might be in all that a theory about why the British kids take up the guitar as well because, in the sense that this music, which is for dancing, foregrounds its rhythmic power and is also unmistakably rhythmic in character, it acquires a kind of force on many different levels that must be considered as a contrast to the type of popular music which it was replacing in the mid fifties. This change penetrated for some reason much deeper than popular music generally would and did.

When Mrs. Thatcher's government declared war on sociology in the 1980s, the Birmingham CCCS was forced to make cutbacks. The first employee to go was the last one they employed: musicologist Dick Bradley.

9. CSI à l'École des Mines (Paris)

Entretiens le 21 mars 1980 avec Jean-Pierre Vignolle (JPV) et Antoine Hennion (AH) au Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation (CSI) à l'École des Mines,

1ère partie : Jean-Pierre Vignolle

Comment ça fonctionne ici ? D'où vient l'argent ?

Le centre a été créé en mars soixante-huit à l'origine par quelqu'un qui était sous-directeur de l'École des Mines. L'École des Mines est, comme un certain nombre de grandes écoles en France, dans un système un peu particulier. C'est à dire que l'enseignement est en général polyvalent. Autrement, c'est un enseignement qui est axé sur les grandes disciplines de base : la mathématique, physique, etc., et qui n'est pas du tout spécialisé dans une direction technique quelle qu'elle soit. Il y avait donc depuis longtemps à l'École des Mines un enseignement d'économie, de droit et il y avait quelques petits éléments d'enseignement, disons, de la sociologie. Ce sous-directeur (M. Lafitte, maintenant le directeur) avait un faible pour la sociologie — ça l'intéressait personnellement — et il a pris sur lui de développer l'enseignement de la sociologie à l'École des Mines et en même temps de créer un centre de recherches qui fonctionnerait de façon autonome sur le plan financier et qui en même temps fournirait des enseignants pour les cours à l'école.

Alors, vous enseignez à toutes les étapes de la formation à l'école ?

Oui. Il y a un cursus de sociologie qui comprend cinq ou six cours et qui est échelonné de la première à la troisième année. Certains cours sont des cours de tronc commun, c'est à dire tous les élèves les suivent obligatoirement; d'autres sont des cours spécialisés: les élèves choisissent parmi une liste de possibilités.

C'est très intéressant qu'on peut étudier la sociologie dans une école pour les futurs ingénieurs.

Oui, c'est un cas tout-à-fait particulier. En général maintenant, il y a dans les grandes écoles quelques rudiments de la sociologie mais celle-ci est la seule où l'enseignement de la sociologie soit aussi développé. D'une part on assure l'enseignement de la sociologie à l'école, d'autre part on travaille sur la recherche. L'École des Mines nous assure les locaux, l'éclairage, les crayons, le papier, le papier, le téléphone; et puis les autres charges, c'est à dire les salaires des gens, on les paie sur les contrats de recherche ou bien, pour certain d'entre nous, on a des pos-

tes du Ministère de l'Industrie qui est le ministère de tutelle pour l'École des Mines. On est quatre ou cinq ici à être employés par l'état, entre autres Antoine Hennion et moi.

Cela me surprend quand-même. Est-ce que le fait que vous assurez à l'École l'enseignement en sociologie est la seule raison pour l'existence du centre de recherche ? N'y a-t-il pas d'autres intérêts ?

En France vous avez la recherche soit au CNRS,³¹ soit celle des organisations qui sont attachées ou à l'université, ou aux grandes écoles. Dans notre cas il y a une partie du personnel qui est employé par l'état.

Qu'est-ce qu'il y a comme chercheurs dans la maison, à part vous et Antoine Hennion ?

Maintenant c'est de plus en plus diversifié. Il y a une équipe qui s'intéresse à la sociologie de la science et des institutions scientifiques. Il y a une deuxième équipe qui s'intéresse aux politiques des entreprises, en particulier aux politiques des multinationales et en même temps à une sociologie des cadres dans les entreprises. Il y a une troisième équipe qui s'intéresse à la déviance, plus précisément aux institutions où on relègue un certain nombre d'« inadaptés sociaux », des délinquants, etc. La quatrième, c'est Antoine Hennion et moi qui depuis quelque temps nous consacrons à la sociologie des institutions musicales, l'industrie du disque, les conservatoires, etc. Puis il y a un type tout seul qui s'intéresse au domaine des décisions publiques.

Chez nous on a commencé par des enquêtes sociologiques et empiriques mais après un certain temps on a constaté que nous ne décrivions que des « quasi-faits » sans bien comprendre ce qu'entendaient les gens par certains termes dans les enquêtes, des termes comme « musique populaire », par exemple. On n'a pu établir aucun rapport entre le vécu musical des gens sur lesquels portait la recherche et la société dont ils faisaient partie. Pour notre institut, qui est un institut de musicologie, c'est un problème fondamental, je trouve. Est-ce que vous aussi, à votre centre ici, avez rencontré des difficultés similaires ?

Je ne sais pas. Jusqu'à présent on n'a pas beaucoup travaillé, ni sur la consommation ni sur la réception musicale. C'est sûrement un problème important et intéressant. On ne s'est vraiment pas attaqué à ce problème pour l'instant mais il faudrait sûrement y venir.

Disons que si vous voulez décrire une sous-culture et la manière dont un groupe social se crée une identité par l'intermédiaire de la musique : c'est à ce

31. CNRS = Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques (organisme d'état).

moment-là que se présentent les problèmes dont je viens de parler. Mais peut-être tout ça, c'est plutôt un problème musicologique?

Nous aussi, nous avons rencontré ce problème mais d'une autre façon parce que l'étude qu'on a fait sur l'industrie du disque, bien qu'elle soit toute entière notre terrain — c'est à dire la production et non pas du tout la réception ou la consommation de la musique— consistait quand-même en une mélange des approches économique, sociologique et musicologique. On voulait voir comment tous ces réseaux de contraintes fonctionnaient en même temps.

Antoine Hennion arrive dans le bureau. Hennion, qui est à la fois musicologue, ingénieur et sociologue, remplace Jean-Pierre Vignolles pendant ce qui reste de cet entretien.

Le centre est né en soixante-huit pour faire un peu la sociologie de la science et c'est comme ça qu'il s'est dégagé. Ce n'était plus les conditions de production de la science ou l'analyse marxiste de la science mais vraiment comment la science se produit. C'est de là que vient l'idée d'étudier la production de la culture. À cette époque il y avait les analyses de Bourdieu qui étaient très, très quadrillées et uniquement sur la consommation, tout ce qu'il y a de la production de l'art étant compris comme fabrication de différences plus ou moins arbitraire consistant à montrer que ces différences servent uniquement aux groupes sociaux pour se différencier : des groupes d'artistes pour prendre la place de la nouvelle avant-garde et, au niveau du public, les marques des différences. Tout ce qu'il y a de création, de production ou même du « sens », c'est gommé. Donc on a commencé à faire de la sociologie de la musique parce que nous, on est ingénieurs des mines d'une côté et sociologues dans ce centre. Puis moi, je suis arrivé à ce moment-là, en soixante-dix ou soixante-et-onze, avec une formation de musicologue. Donc c'est un peu pourquoi on a démarré sur la musique ou plutôt dans le disque, parce que le disque, c'est l'entreprise, il y a de l'économie, c'est une branch, il y a du matériel, c'est une industrie, ce qui fait plus sérieux pour l'École! Quand on est arrivé dans le disque on s'est branché sur les variétés parce qu'on ne peut pas comprendre le disque en étudiant le classique qui ne représente que quinze pour cent du marché. Puis, indépendamment de nos goûts, ce qu'il y avait d'intéressant, c'était dans les variétés.

Quand avez-vous commencé votre enquête sur le disque?

10. Paul Beaud (Lausanne)

Entretien le soir du 21 mars 1980 avec Paul Beaud dans une brasserie à Montparnasse (Paris).